

**Agenda For the Meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council
On 23rd September 2025
At Cromwell Presbyterian Church Rooms**

| Timetable | Council Meeting |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 10:45am | Executive only meeting |
| 11:30am | Research Reports to Council – Staff presentations |
| 12:00pm | Lunch |
| 12:30pm | Councillor Only Session |
| 12:45pm | Meeting Begins |
| 1:30pm | Public Excluded Session |
| 2.30pm | Peter Ravenscroft - Guest Speaker |
| 3:00pm | Afternoon Tea |
| 3.15 pm | Public Forum |
| 5.00 pm | Meeting Ends |

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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 Tuesday 22nd July 2025

At Tapanui

1.0 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 12.30pm and the Chair welcomed everyone.

Apologies: Neil Harraway (Otago Conservation Board)

Moved: Cr Weatherall, Cr May

That apologies be accepted.

Carried

2.0 Matters to be raised not on the agenda

Cr Weatherall wished to discuss the agenda for the joint meeting with Southland Fish & Game Council.

3.0 Declarations of Interest

Cr Highton said he had been making submissions, but making clear he did so as an individual.

Cr Cruden said that similarly he had made submissions and was a committee member of Forest & Bird.

4.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Moved: Cr Weatherall, Cr Highton

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 20th May 2025 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Carried.

Cr Preedy said the summer hunting season for paradise shelduck was poorly utilised by game licence holders. Not many people knew it was on and it was poorly advertised.

The Communications Officer said the summer season was promoted through a media release, pre-season direct email, Facebook, and in the regulations guide.

5.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Cr May asked for update about the family licence.

The CE said no further information had been received.

6.0 Health and Safety Report June/July

The CE said the health and safety report was tabled to be received, and he noted one other matter would be discussed in the public-excluded session.

Moved: Cr Highton, Cr Barker

**That the health and safety report for June/July be received.
Carried**

7.0 Items Requiring Decisions

7.1 Legislative Compliance 2024-25 Financial Year

The CE noted this was the last Council meeting before the end of the financial year. The amount of legislation to which Fish & Game was required to comply was significant. A few changes had been adopted. He pointed out 90-day employments trials were back. There had also been changes to the Holiday Act. The Xero system usually updated those automatically.

Last year the organisation only had to comply with tier three audit reporting, which was less onerous than tier two for public entities, and this made annual reporting easier.

The CE said in his opinion the Council was compliant with all obligations under the Acts, and he was happy for councillors to test that opinion.

The Chair said he was impressed the CE had it covered and under control.

Moved: Cr Highton, Cr Preedy

That Council notes that the Council currently complies with the relevant legislation described below.

Carried

Cr Barker asked about KiwiSaver Act what responsibilities the organisation had if an employee did not want to enrol.

The CE replied employees were automatically enrolled but had the opportunity to opt out.

Moved: Cr Trevathan, Cr Cruden

That Council moves into Public Excluded Items.

Carried.

8.0 Public Excluded Items

8.1 Draft Public Excluded Minutes for 20th May 2025

8.2 Ratification of Extraordinary Meetings and Confirm Draft OF&GC Public Excluded Minutes from 11th June and 24 June 2025.

Moved: Cr Highton, Cr Preedy

1. Council endorses the minutes from both meetings and ratifies the decisions made.

Carried.

Moved: Cr May, Cr Trevathan

2. That Council brings into the public record;

1) Council agreed to pause the progress of the Otago Sports Fish and Game Management Plan and writes to the Minister of Hunting and Fishing to seek further advice on its progress in light of the reforms announced.

2) That the Council agreed to sign a Sale and Purchase agreement for its Wanaka Section (Title: Lot 1 Deposited Plan 608104) for the sum of \$1,810,000 including GST (if any).

Carried.

8.3 Building Update

8.4 Otago Property Reserve Expenditure

8.5 Report on the Bendigo Ophir Gold Project

The CE spoke to a report from the Environmental Officer warning of long-term effects from the Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project, currently listed for fast-tracked processing. The project catchment was directly above the nationally important Lake Dunstan fishery. Impacts of surface water from the project were of concern. Contaminants would be discharged underground over 40-60 years after the mine construction began. By the time effects were felt, the project would be long gone.

However, due to uncertainty about F&G's opportunity for input under the Fast-Track Approvals Act, the Environmental Officer recommended a conservative approach to investigating the application and developing a case.

The CE asked councillors for feedback but agreed a conservative approach was probably appropriate.

Cr McIntyre asked if the project would affect access for hunters. The Operations Manager said game bird hunting took place in the Bendigo Scenic Reserve.

Cr May said it would be good for the Environmental Officer to look further at the implications of the mine. However, Cr McIntyre said taking a case to court would not achieve success. The CE asked if councillors were prepared to hire consultants to study, for example, underground hydrology.

Cr Highton said he supported the Environmental Officer's recommended conservative approach and Cr McIntyre agreed.

Council agreed to:

1. **Receive the report; and**
2. **Council is comfortable with the conservative approach taken by staff to date.**

The CE undertook to advise the Environment Officer to bring any further issues to the Council, including any concerns for upland game bird hunting access

8.6 Update on the Collaboration Agreement between Otago Fish and Game Council and Friends of Bullock Creek Trust

8.7 Habitat Enhancement Fund Application – Hill

Moved: Cr May, Cr Highton

That the Council:

1. **Contribute another \$1,000 to the Hills wetland development project**
2. **Donate one of the unallocated kitset maimai (cost to OFGC ~\$230)**
3. **Contribute another 100 wetland plants which are not specifically required by OFGC for other projects at present.**

Carried.

8.8 Opening Weekend Incident Update

The meeting adjourned at 2.10pm and resumed at 2.20pm.

9.0 Financial Report

The CE said the financial report was there to be received. A good flow of term investments was coming through and supporting the funding of the new building. He

noted Councillors had agreed to the purchase of a drone. He also referred Councillors to a separate appendix report on a proposed drone purchase. He invited questions.

Regarding drones, Cr Barker noted he did not see anything mentioned about the cost of memory storage.

Asked about the options, the Operations Managers said staff had recommended for a non-thermal drone which offered a better-quality mapping camera.

Asked about running costs, the CE replied they were low. Other costs were insurance, training and software access

The CE reiterated that drone technology could not replace fixed-wing aircraft in conducting, for example, paradise shelduck moult counts at 45 sites spread over thousands of hectares throughout the region.

The Operations Manager said the drone would create new functionality and could perhaps assist in finding better methods for species monitoring.

Amending the recommendation, Cr Weatherall said Council should also agree to fund appropriate costs to train staff and cover associated costs, such as licensing, for its operation.

Cr Highton asked if the Council had paid for Clutha Mata-Au Sportsfish and Habitat Trust set-up expenses. The CE confirmed it had indeed, and that Council would reclaim the costs. He referred to a revenue table shown elsewhere on the financial report.

Moved: Cr May, Cr Barker

1. **That the Council agrees to fund the purchase of a drone to the value of \$9,999 incl GST and fund staff training and associated costs to operate the drone.**
2. **That the Finance Report and Licence Report to the 30th June 2025 be received.**

Carried.

10.0 Chief Executive's Report

Species Management

The CE said Anglers Notice had been submitted. A triennial review would start towards the end of next year.

An ORC report on galaxiid protection had been circulated. The CE suggested Council invited the report author Pete Ravenscroft to address the next Council meeting and describe the species interaction work in more detail.

Staff were keeping a close eye on consents at Macraes mine which could impact the hatchery. Staff were keeping options open for alternative sites for a reticulated system.

In response to a question from Cr Cruden about the Macraes mine future and fast-tracking, the CE noted the government had overturned DOC's objection for resource consent.

But it was important that Council thought about the long-term future of the hatchery. Cr Barker asked about the potential to work with the Clutha Mata-Au Sportsfish and Habitat Trust to rear trout. The CE replied the proposed Clutha hatchery would be salmon only.

Clutha Lagoon

Cr May asked about progress on a potential project for Clutha Lagoon. The CE said the area was complex – a mixture of wetlands, coastal marine area and landholdings, with a stopbank flood scheme and sea level rise challenges. Cr Barker said the Clutha Mata-Au Trust was looking at the lagoon as a possible project.

Licensing

The CE warned proposed changes to the family licence could cause loss of income and discriminate against people who could not have children, same-sex couples, and empty nesters. Proposed fee increases to the family licence could also drive people out of the category.

The CE flagged there could be adverse feedback to the family licence changes that staff would have to manage. He suggested Council send its original submission on licensing proposals to the Minister.

Moved: Cr Barker, Cr Trevathan

That the CE's report be received

Carried.

11.0 RMA Planning and Consents Report

The CE said the RMA Planning and Consents Report was for Council's information.

Moved: Cr Weatherall, Cr Highton

1. That the report be received.

Carried.

12.0 Committee & Delegate Reports

12.1 Clutha Fisheries Trust

A report from CFT Chair Ian Cole was tabled.

12.2 New Zealand Fish and Game Council

A five-page summary from Otago NZC delegate Mike Barker was tabled.

Cr Barker told councillors all regions aside from Northland had recommended the proposed licence fee increase be accepted. He noted the Minister had not signed off on the licensing proposals yet.

Cr Barker summarised the details of the option approved by NZC for the family licence modernisation. In response to a question from the CE, Cr Barker said children could fish independently and adults could fish independently under the modernised family licence.

Cr Weatherall asked, as a ranger conducting compliance work, he could end up with three different people fishing in three different locations under the same licence. Cr Barker confirmed that was correct.

Cr Barker noted a decision to rescind a Managers Accord and consider a Regional Chairs Forum. He said the Minister had been keen for the NZC to be comprised of regional council Chairs, but regional Chairs were not in favour of that idea. The NZC Chair had instead proposed a Chairs forum to satisfy the Minister.

Cr McIntyre asked Cr Barker about governance training. Otago was among the regions that did not request a governance workshop. The workshops were still available. Cr McIntyre asked whether councillors would like to take up the offer of a whole-day training workshop late in the year. Cr Weatherall suggested other providers for governance training. Cr McIntyre suggested looking at alternative options in the new year.

Cr Preedy asked Cr Barker about NZC's views on health and safety requirements for regional councils. Cr Barker said that after discussions with Work and Safety, the advice they received was each of the regional F&G councils were not viewed as separate entities but that F&G was one organisation, and that health and safety should be directed through the NZC CE.

The Otago CE said a tight description might be required of where PCBU lines lay. He asked why NZC wanted to take on the liability of various regions.

Public forum

The Chair welcomed licence holder and Teviot Angling Club member Graeme Rae. Mr Rae raised several matters:

People were asking about a proposed trail and salmon; there had been a meeting three years ago but no updates. He noted Fish & Game members were on the Trust.

Some Teviot Anglers members were from Southland, where disputes over angling access had arisen. Members felt Southland Fish & Game was not

focusing on core mandates and that involvement in water quality issues damaged relationships with farmers.

Mr Rae believed water quality was the Otago Regional Council's (ORC) responsibility. Fish & Game could raise concerns but should not lead enforcement or court action. Members thought ORC was ineffective and that Fish & Game was too close to it.

Councillors responded:

Cr Weatherall said there were opportunities to influence ORC from within. Cr McIntyre noted Otago Fish & Game had good relationships with Federated Farmers and ORC, and many licence holders expected Fish & Game to advocate for clean water. Mr Rae said he bought a licence to catch fish, not for water advocacy.

The CE noted Teviot Anglers had recently sought action over Queenstown District Council's wastewater discharges; he asked if Mr Rae was suggesting no involvement. Mr Rae said Fish & Game should refer such issues to ORC but avoid court action like in Southland. The CE said Southland's court case aimed to strengthen water quality protections. Mr Rae replied that the result was lost access to rivers.

Further discussion covered:

The CE and councillors emphasised Fish & Game's statutory duty to protect habitat and water quality, as these underpin fishing and hunting opportunities. Mr Rae disagreed, saying he did not buy a licence for habitat work. Cr Barker highlighted advocacy on water allocation (e.g., Lindis River) and updated on the salmon Trust's progress toward requirements for hatchery consents. Mr Rae suggested the Trust issue a media release.

Mr Rae thanked the Council for hearing his concerns.

12.3 Ngai Tahu

None.

12.4 Conservation Board

Apology.

12.5 Clutha Mata Au Sports Fish and Habitat Trust

Cr Barker, a member of the Trust, said the Trust was moving forward as quickly as possible. The Trust had received a report from Cawthron Institute that recommended the best way forward to meet its objectives was to establish a salmon hatchery. The Trust had commissioned a report to establish what effect it would have on native fish. The Trust had also commissioned expertise on which consents were required to establish a hatchery.

12.6 Tiaki Maniototo

Cr Highton, the Fish & Game governance representative to Tiaki Maniototo, said the project was coming to an end due to funding. It would meet next Thursday. The parent Upper Taieri Wai would remain as a catchment group. Tiaki Maniototo would remain as a nursery. Cr Highton said he was disappointed Fish & Game had not engaged more with Tiaki Maniototo on access improvements. He was also keen to see Fish & Game engage with iwi and Tiaki Maniototo to facilitate a joint wetland project at Tunaheketaka (Taieri Lake). On Friday Tiaki Maniototo would show a group around work done in the upper Taieri and it was an opportunity for Fish & Game to interact.

13.0 Correspondence

13.1 NZC to Otago

The CE discussed the correspondence between NZC and OF&GC, and noted an upcoming meeting between the Minister and Council.

Councillors discussed what questions OF&GC should put to the Minister regarding proposed reforms, following the Minister's meeting with Southland F&GC. The meeting would be held at 7.30pm on July 29th.

Cr McIntyre said councillors had provided him a list of questions. Councillors asked that the questions to be circulated. Cr Preedy said a key question to ask was how much funding Otago would receive from licensing revenue. Cr Weatherall said the question should not focus on licensing income but rather budget approvals and funding. There was discussion about the resource allocation model.

Moved: Cr Highton, Cr May

That correspondence be received and noted.

Carried.

14.0 Items to be Received or Noted

14.1 Lake Hāwea Creel Survey 2022-2025

Cr Highton expressed concerns about the condition of salmon caught in Lake Hawea. He believed lake level fluctuations were related to salmon condition. This would be important if the Trust was to rely on harvesting wild salmon eggs for the hatchery.

Cr Barker agreed there could be a correlation between lake levels and catch rates. He suggested the trends could be analysed more deeply.

Cr May commended staff on the excellent reports. Cr Trevathan said rainfall also needed to be considered.

The CE asked councillors what the governance outcome was they were seeking. If councillors decided on the outcome, staff could design a method to meet it.

Cr Highton said he was seeking reassurance there would be a salmon population to provide eggs for the hatchery project.

The Operations Manager said there was potential for a project across the three deep lakes around salmon and rainbow trout interactions. There could be loose trends between population fluctuations between the different species.

The Chair thanked staff for the report.

Councillors said there had been much discussion in the past few years about the need for a lakes conference. The Operations Manager said he understood other organisations might also have planned to hold a deep lakes conference soon, and he would investigate.

Cr Barker said it would be good to provide feedback to angling clubs about what Fish & Game is doing.

The Operations Manager said the report would go on the website and would be publicly digestible.

The Chair said recommendations from all the staff reports would be received together.

14.2 Re Consent Reporting on Takitakitoa Wetland Restoration Project

Cr Weatherall said the report was excellent. He asked if staff could have a look at the location of some maimais and improve them.

Cr Highton said Takitakitoa was a wonderful place but looked “pretty crap” for hunters according to the harvest data. Fish & Game should be making more of the hunting opportunities at Takitakitoa. It was a marvellous reservoir for birds that got shot elsewhere but he agreed with Cr Weatherall there should be more focus on increasing the bird harvest rate at Takitakitoa.

The CE said the low harvest at Takitakitoa could partly be attributed to the skill levels of novice and junior hunters to whom maimai allocations were prioritised.

Cr Highton asked if staff could provide more harvest data from Takitakitoa permit holders for the whole season, not just opening weekend.

There were also discussions about teal and wheelchair access.

The CE said staff were applying for resource consent for wheelchair access at a Fish and Game-managed wetland at Inch Clutha and were waiting for feedback from Aukaha.

14.3 **Otago Regional Council Galaxiid Restoration and Salmonid Removal Report (2024–2025)**

The CE said a full ORC report prepared by Pete Ravenscroft had been circulated to Councillors via email. Council had agreed to invite Mr Ravenscroft to present at its next meeting.

Cr Preedy questioned the high number of trout removed and said more should be relocated, not euthanised. The CE said staff were present to relocate trout in the second round of removals.

14.4 **Preliminary Drift Dive Report 2025**

Cr Highton asked what actions Otago Fish & Game was going to take regarding the rivers doing badly in the report, such as the Lochy and Greenstone.

He asked if their Designated Waters status needed to be changed.

The CE replied there were two factors: the state of the fishery and the anglers. Didymo had had an obvious impact on recruitment and the numbers of fish present. However, the declines started earlier than that. He said discussions were required around regulations and whether the controlled fishery in the Greenstone should be continued when it was not getting the pressure it used to. The questions should come to the Council for the Anglers Notice.

The Chair asked for a mover and seconder that the reports be received.

Moved: Cr May/Cr Trevathan:

That the staff reports be received.

Carried.

There was no Council vote on other recommendations in the staff reports. Those were:

- **That the creel survey for the next three seasons planned for Lake Dunstan is planned and recorded implementing the recommendations proposed in the discussion.**
- **That the designated waters status of the Upper Lochy be reviewed at the next triennial fishery regulation review.**
- **Continue and expand the Otago Drift Diving project with further drift dives to be planned for the 2025/2026 season, prioritising other designated waters.**

15.0 **General Business**

Karakia

Cr May said she was worried about the Ministerial Review and encouraged the Council to incorporate karakia in its meetings to show respect for Māori culture. She said it might encourage engagement by Ngai Tahu at Council meetings. Cr Trevathan questioned the necessity.

The CE said the Ngai Tahu representative to OF&GC was appointed by Ngai Tahu under the Claims Settlement Act. The current delegate was critically busy and was just returning from overseas engagements. But he was not opposed to the suggestion.

Cr Highton suggested that the Ngai Tahu delegate be invited to offer a karakia when present at the Council meetings.

Cr Preedy said he had some experience working with Maori on boards of trustees and they were extremely busy because there were so many jobs they were expected to do.

Catch and release

Cr May also expressed concerns about angler catch and release practices. She suggested staff produce a video on how to do it. Cr Barker supported the idea.

The Chair said it was a good idea, and the CE and Communications Officer would take it up.

The Operations Manager said the *Weekly Fishing Report* educated anglers about ethical catch and release practices.

Cr Preedy suggested a video on how to dispatch fish.

Southland meeting

Councillors then discussed the agenda for the joint meeting with Southland Fish & Game Council that evening.

The Council meeting ended at 5pm

5.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

6.0 Health and Safety Report Aug/Sept 2025

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

- Bird counts- ground
- Spawning surveys
- Boat Creel Surveys
- Take a Kid Fishing and Adult learner classes
- Fish transportation
- Hatchery spawning
- Drone use and training

OHS Audits - Internal

Completed audits:

- Hazardous substances
- Ranger Support

Next audit areas:

- Boat Safety and hazard list
- Vehicle hazards and safety equipment
- Cromwell Office Audits
- Main Hazard Register - ongoing

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

- Bendigo Reserve. A staff member damaged his back lifting and twisting while working. Injury improving.
- Drone use hazards to be complied
- New chemicals for rabbit control – storage and use
- Cromwell office construction site for fence and new concrete yard area. Concrete complete.
- Staff member tweaked a knee lifting fish food bags at the hatchery

Training Completed

- VHF radio qualifications
- Boat masters training underway for new staff member
- 2 staff and CE completed refresher first aid course – all passed

General Discussions, Actions

- Reminder of extra care on the roads due to danger from weather changes. (Frost/snow/ice)
- Reminder of careful lifting techniques for shifting files, furniture and trees
- Updated smoke flares for boats
- Discussion on shifting chemicals to new site

Recommendation

- 1. To receive the health and safety report for August/September**

Sharon Milne
Administration Officer
15th September 2025

7.0 Items Requiring Decisions

7.1 Revised Operational Workplan and Budget 2025-2026

Attached to this agenda is an updated operational workplan and budget for adoption. If approved the budget will be immediately used to update our accounting package as the new financial year is already underway.

The delay arose from the Minister's late decision not to approve the New Zealand Council's (NZC) recommended licence fee increase, followed by the NZC's own delayed consideration and notification to regions of the outcomes from its meeting on budget allocations, levies, and related matters.

NZC guidance on budgets

New Zealand Council taken a simple approach to budget approvals this year by reverting to budget allocations based on 2024/25 base funds, plus 2.5% across the board. It has hinted that any shortfalls in *regional* budgets will need to be funded from *regional* reserves.

NZC funding shortfall from also to come from Regional Reserves

Without consultation, NZC is also calling upon regions to fund the shortfall to the national budget. Otago is required to pay an additional \$6,817 and while that is an insignificant amount, it is unnecessary when NZC is holding substantial reserves. Some regions will be further pushed below the 20% mark which policy insists that they must maintain. This may need to be questioned.

This will be in addition to a levy demand from Otago of \$1,139,410, one of the biggest in the country.

Revised 2025/26 Operational Workplan

Staff have reviewed to OWP and believe it can be adopted unchanged from the draft approved at the July Council meeting.

Just to reiterate, the OWP has a lot of 'business as usual'. We took 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 so there is a need to remain flexible.

Budget

I have revised the budget against the workplan and made the following changes to ensure the least disruption to core work, and to manage risks:

- \$18,000 of funding for spawning survey work, sportsfish monitoring by drift diving and Designated Waters management to come from the councils ***Non Resident Reserve Fund***.
- \$37,450 for final contracted rent payments on Hanover Street office and storage to come from the ***Otago Property Reserve*** as a one off.
- Reduced or removed other project funding to make a balanced budget including \$5000 for native fish protection, \$4000 for R3 advice from a USA specialist, \$2000 for the sportsfish management plan which is now on hold.

Asset replacement

The asset replacement fund sits at \$5404. We will need to replace one vehicle in the next financial year at a changeover cost of around \$25,000. 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 2026/27 financial year.

Recommendations

That the Council;

- **Agree to the revised 2025/26 operational workplan.**
- **Agree to the revised budget including funding of essential operational workplan items from Otago Council Reserves namely;**
 - **\$18,000 from the Non Resident Reserve**
 - **\$37,450 from the Otago Property Reserve to fund the remaining three lease payments on the Hanover Street building and associated storage.**
- **Write to NZC and suggest the national shortfall of \$67,562 be funded from its own Reserves rather than from regional reserves.**

Ian Hadland
Chief Executive
10th Sept 2025

7.2 Donald Scott Memorial Scholarship Fund

Background

The Donald Scott Memorial Scholarship in Freshwater Ecology was established in memory of Associate Professor Donald Scott (1927-2019) through a donation by Donald's wife Patricia Scott and ongoing support from Otago Fish & Game Council and Clutha Fisheries Trust. The Council committed to contributing \$5,000 annually for five years (2021-2025) from the Non-Resident Reserve.

The scholarship provides support for students conducting research into New Zealand freshwater ecology, and is intended to inform best practice and sustainability for management of fisheries and waterways.

A Donor Report from the University is in inwards correspondence. Staff have asked for a more detailed breakdown in future.

Key Outcomes

- **Three active scholars** are:
 - ✓ **Robert Morgan (2025)** – Investigating aluminium and heavy metals in Southland Rivers and how they affect waterway health.
 - ✓ **Jasmine Ruby Lane (2024)** – Investigating distribution and population structure of giant kokopu in the Lake Tuakitoto catchment and assessment of their habitat.
 - ✓ **Isaac Davies (2023)** – Investigating habitat and distribution of native fish species in the Cardrona Valley, the interaction with introduced fish species, and the larval processes and spread of threatened Clutha flathead galaxiids.
- The scholarship strengthens Council's relationship with the University of Otago, one of the five pillars of our **Communications Strategy**. It also elevates Fish & Game's profile among emerging scientists, and promotes best practice in fisheries management.
- The Cardrona Valley fish research conducted by the first scholar was profiled by the Communications Officer and gained national media attention. Other scholarship research offers more opportunities for positive exposure for Fish & Game.

Funding The Scholarship

With Council's five-year commitment to the scholarship concluding this year, the Council now needs to decide whether it wishes to continue its support. The University also believes additional fundraising potential exists through collaboration with professional fishing guides, angling clubs, and other partners, and asked for Fish & Game's assistance in this regard via our contacts and communication channels.

Recommendation

That Council:

Continue its annual financial contribution to the Donald Scott Memorial Scholarship of \$5,000 for three years from the Non-Resident Reserve.

Bruce Quirey

Communications Officer

September 15, 2025

7.3 DRAFT 2026-27 Game Gazette Notice (Gamebird hunting regulations)

Introduction

Fish & Game New Zealand, through its national and regional councils, holds a statutory responsibility under the Conservation Act 1987 to manage, maintain, and enhance gamebird resources for the benefit of hunters and the wider public. Gamebird species are listed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Act 1953, which provides them with legal protection outside of declared hunting seasons. Each year, Fish & Game Councils review monitoring data, harvest trends, and habitat conditions to determine appropriate season lengths, bag limits, and hunting methods. These regulations are publicly notified in the New Zealand Gazette and require approval from the Minister of Conservation, ensuring that harvest remains sustainable and that the long-term health of gamebird populations is maintained.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the draft 2026 Game Gazette Regulations. While the Council seeks to maintain consistency in regulations from year to year, and to align settings with those of neighbouring regions, a comprehensive review is undertaken on a triennial basis to avoid the complications of frequent incremental changes. As the upcoming 2026 season coincides with a triennial review, a number of amendments are proposed. This report provides an overview of population and harvest monitoring, considers regulatory approaches in adjoining regions, and sets out the rationale for the recommended changes.

Timeline

The council has approved a procedure which requires that a draft set of regulations be circulated to interested parties (including iwi) for consultation ahead of its final deliberations on the regulations in December 2025. Staff will report to that meeting the outcome of that consultation. There may be one further opportunity to refine if the Council agrees to meet in late January. At that point the paradise shelduck monitoring will also be complete.

Definitions

For clarity, in this report:

- **"Greylard"** refers to mallard ducks, grey ducks, and their hybrids, a term used due to the difficulty of distinguishing pure mallard ducks from grey ducks.
- **"Waterfowl"** includes greylards, paradise shelduck, black swans, shoveler, and pukeko.
- **"Upland game"** refers to pheasants, Californian quail, and Chukar.

Annual Harvest Survey

Harvest of gamebirds is monitored through the national gamebird phone survey, which has operated since 1993 to estimate harvest, effort, and average bags for each species across New Zealand. In Otago, this involves contacting 200 randomly selected hunters after Opening Weekend, followed by 120 every two weeks until July, with an additional survey in September covering the extended August season for upland game, paradise shelduck, and black swans. A separate harvest survey was conducted this season focussed on the paradise duck special season.

Gamebird populations in Otago are monitored using a range of methods, including aerial moult counts, road observational transects, and location-specific sampling.

Waterfowl

Greylards

Harvest Monitoring:

The number of greylards harvested varies considerably, with a statistically insignificant downward trend over the period ($p = 0.30$). In 2025, the total greylard harvest was 53,400, which is almost 1,500 more than in 2024 but 3,700 below the long-term average of 57,100 birds. Over the 1993-2025 period the long-term mean of hunter effort has remained quite static at ~60,000 hours.

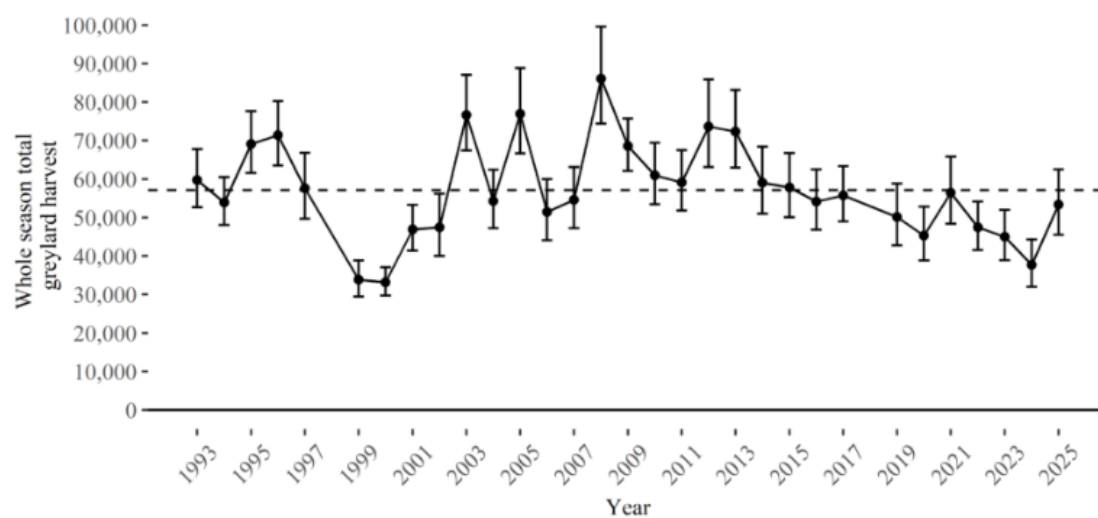


Figure 1: Total greylard harvest in Otago, 1993–2025. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals, and the dotted line indicates the long-term average.

Population Monitoring:

Historically, greylards have been monitored using aerial transects. However, due to the lack of a statistically significant relationship between aerial counts and harvest numbers, this monitoring method is under review. Fish & Game National Council is currently developing standard operating procedures for greylard population monitoring. At present, there is no indication of any sustainability concerns for the population.

Harvest survey additional harvest questions

Preferred Mallard Bag

Hunters were asked for their preferred mallard daily bag limit. There was strong support for the status quo of 25 birds, with over half of respondents choosing this option. Support for increasing the bag was far lower than for decreasing it. There was also a large remainder of respondents who did not provide a direct answer to the question.

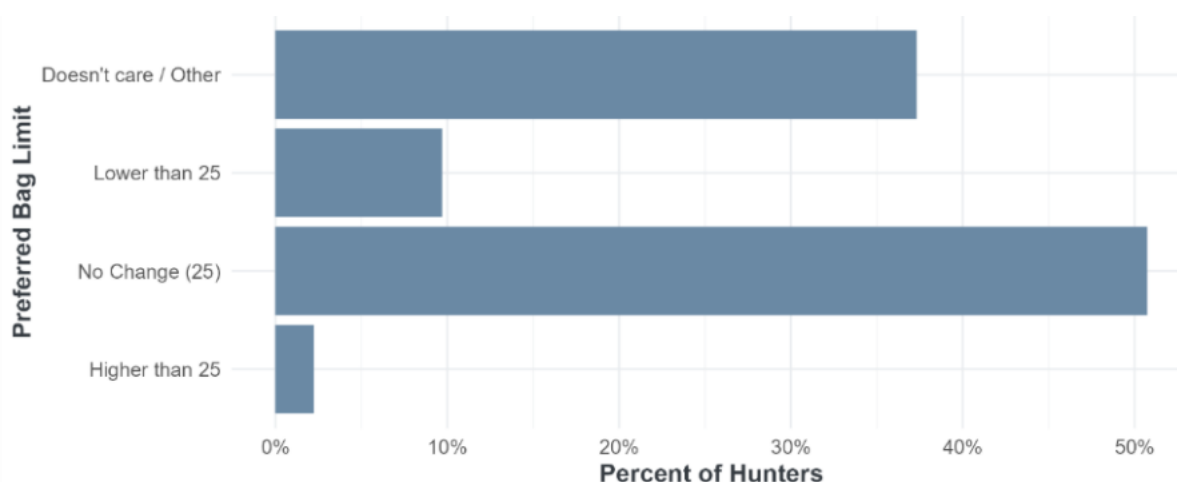


Figure 2: Hunters preferred mallard bag limits from the 2025 survey (n= 134).

Preferred Mallard Season Length

Hunters were asked their preferred season hunting length (Figure 5). Just over half gave their support to the current season length. This increases to almost two-thirds when the 23% of hunters with no preference or those that only hunt Opening Weekend were excluded. When the categories are combined, there was a slightly higher preference for a longer season at 17% than for a shorter season at 10%.

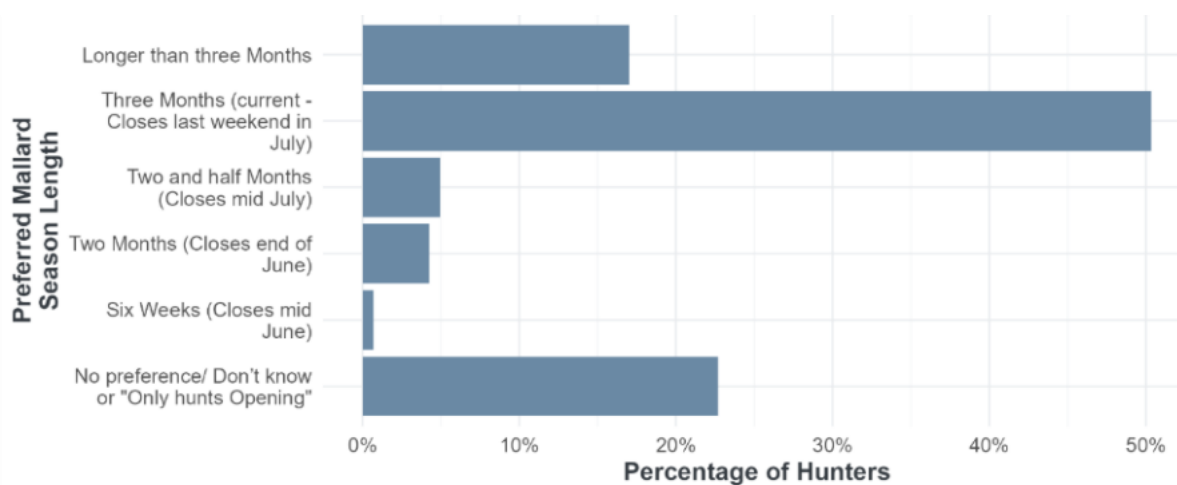


Figure 3: Hunters preferred mallard season length (n=141).

Table 1: Neighbouring regions regulations for greylands

| Region | Bag Limit | Season |
|----------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Otago | 25 | 3 May to 27 July |
| Central South Island | 50 | 3 May to 27 July |
| West Coast | 15 | 3 May to 27 July |
| Southland | 25 | 3 May to 13 July |

Neighbouring regions regulations

Otago's greylard bag limit is aligned with Southland's, which was increased in 2025, while sitting between the Central South Island limit of 50 and the West Coast limit of 15. Otago's greylard season length is consistent with all other regions except Southland, which finishes two weeks earlier.

Proposed Change: None

Based on current harvest data, there is no evidence to suggest that the greylard population in Otago is under threat, and the downward trend in harvest is not statistically significant. Hunter preferences from related surveys show strong support for maintaining existing bag limits and season lengths. There is no scientific or practical justification to change the greylard bag limit or season length, and it is recommended that both remain unchanged for the upcoming season.

Paradise shelduck/Pūtangitangi

Harvest Monitoring: An estimated 17,260 paradise shelduck were harvested in the Otago Region this hunting season, about 4,000 birds above the long-term average and 5,600 more than the previous season (Figure 4). Since 1993, paradise shelduck harvests in the Otago Region have shown a small but statistically significant increasing trend ($p = 0.01$). The mean paradise shelduck bag over the last five years has been around 2.5- 4 birds per hunt, which illustrates that on average hunters are likely only achieving one third of their bag limit. (Figure 5).

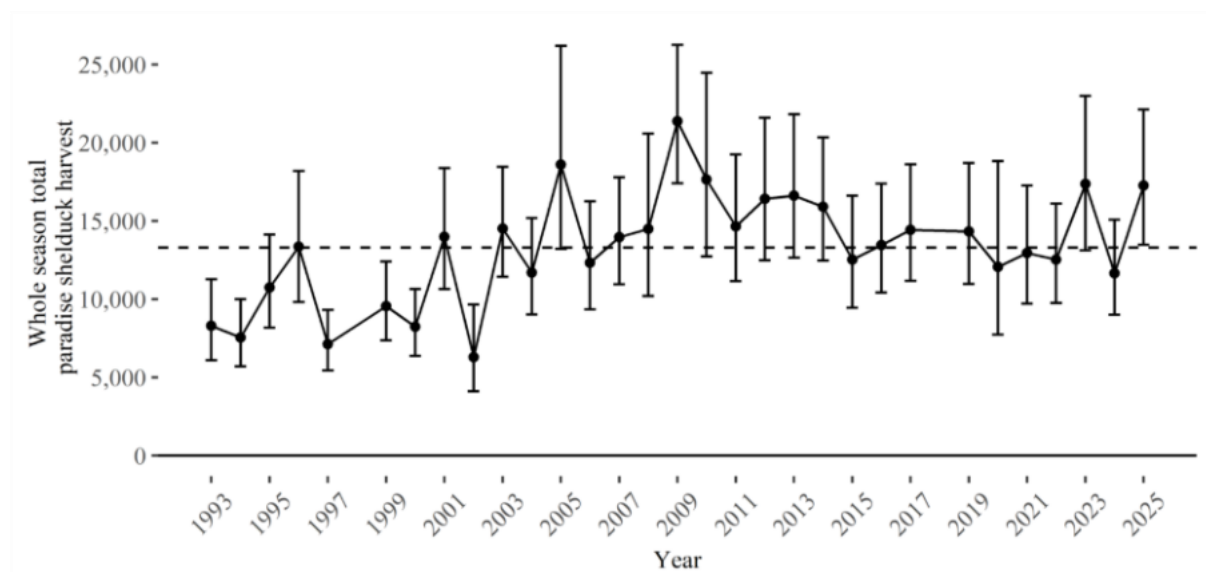


Figure 4: Total paradise shelduck harvest in Otago, 1993–2025. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals, and the dotted line indicates the long-term average.

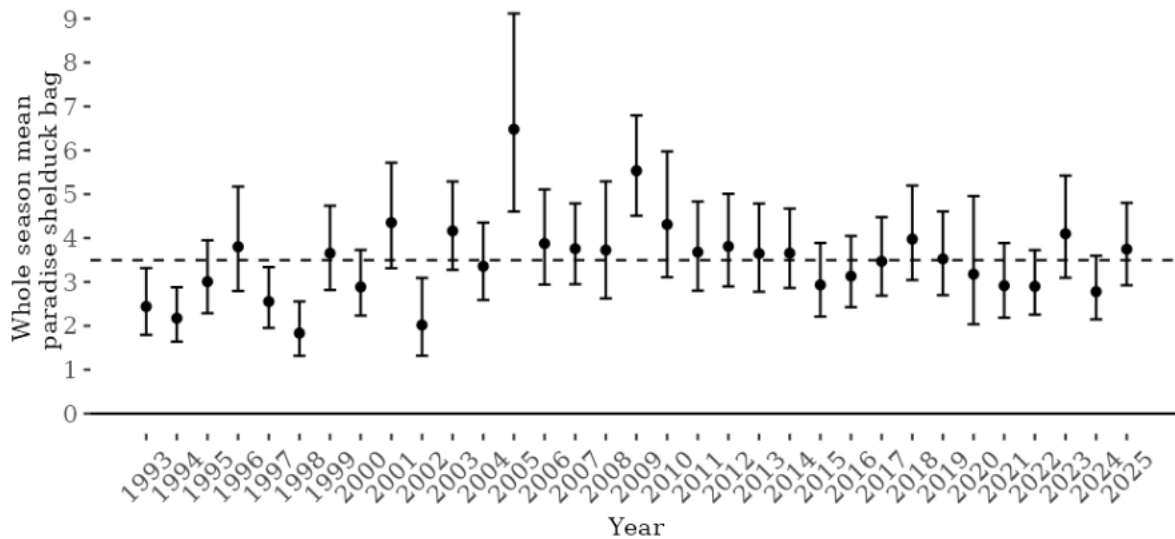


Figure 5: Whole season mean paradise shelduck bag in Otago, 1993–2025. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals, and the dotted line indicates the long-term average.

Population monitoring:

The 2025 paradise shelduck count of 26,437 was the highest count on record, a marked increase from the 5-year low 18,181 in 2024 (Figure 6). Total moult counts have shown a statistically significant increase over time ($p = 0.005$), with numbers exceeding 20,000 birds each year from 2019–2025, excluding 2024 (Figure 6). This year's count fell outside the management band of 16,000 to 23,000 outlined in Priest (2023), which would normally justify an increase in the daily bag limit for the next season. However, due to the threat of avian botulism on the East Otago population and the ongoing threat of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI-5), the council decided to act conservatively and maintain the current bag limit rather than increase it for 2025.

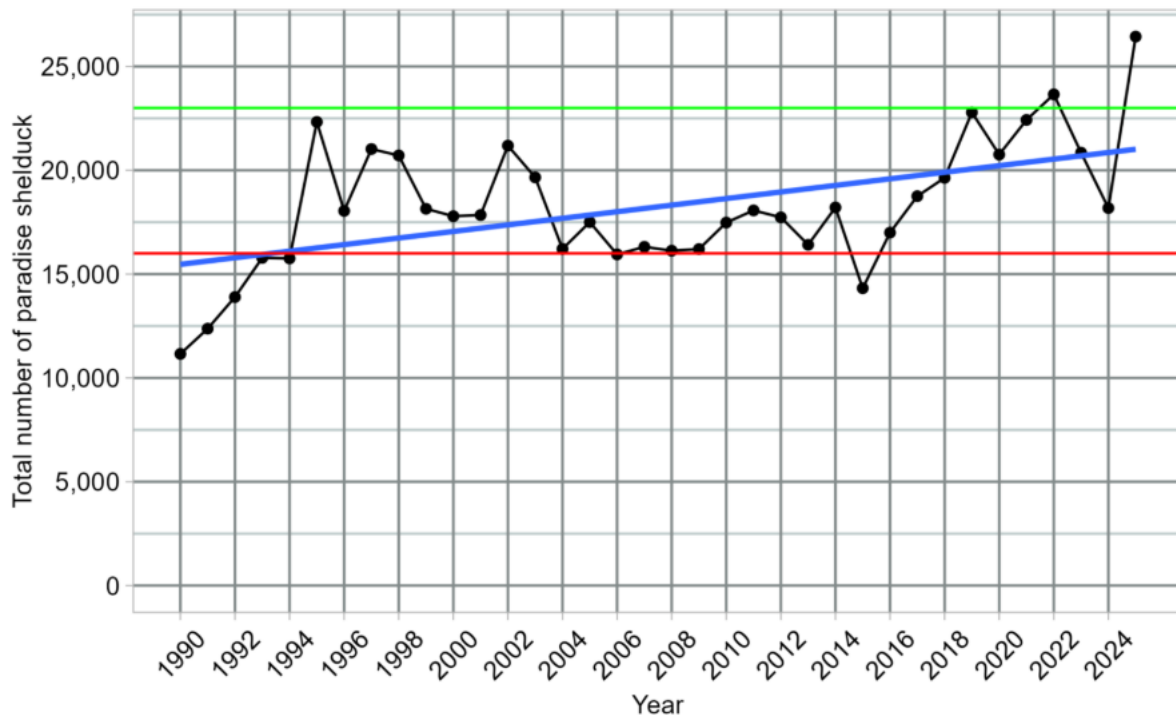


Figure 6: Long-term (1990-2025) count totals for paradise shelduck. Long-term linear trend shown in blue. The management bands of 16,000 and 23,000 shelduck shown in red and green respectively.

Table 2: Neighbouring regions regulations for Paradise shelduck

| Region | Bag Limit | Season |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Otago | 12 | 3 May to 31 August |
| Central South Island | 25 (25)* | 3 May to 27 July (28 Jul to 28 Sep)* |
| West Coast | 15 | 3 May to 27 July |
| Southland | (10) 6 | (3 May to 4 May) 5 May to 13 July (West of State Highway 1)* |

Neighbouring regions regulations

Otago is not aligned with any of the other neighbouring regions in either bag limits or season lengths. The regular paradise shelduck bag limit in Otago falls between the Central South Island (25), West Coast (15), and Southland (6), although Southland has an increased limit of 10 for Opening Weekend. Otago's season length is longer than those in Southland and the West Coast, while the Central South Island allows hunting in specific areas to continue until the last weekend in September.

Proposed changes: Increase paradise shelduck limit from 12 to 15

This year's population count would have justified an increase in the bag limit to 15 based on management threshold described in Priest (2023). However, due to the threat of avian botulism affecting the East Otago population, the council decided not to implement this increase, given the uncertainty about its impact on the overall population and the risk of disease spread. Fortunately, the outbreak remained contained to a single moult site of approximately 1,000 birds. Even accounting for these deaths, the population would still have exceeded the threshold required to increase the bag limit. Furthermore, the whole season mean bag per hunter indicates that, on average, hunters historically harvest less than four paradise ducks per season. This suggests that increasing the bag limit is unlikely to

substantially affect total harvest, while still providing additional opportunity for hunters targeting these birds. Given the current long season, there is no reason to extend it further, as it already provides sufficient opportunity for hunting after the closure of the greyland season.

Paradise shelduck/Pūtangitangi Summer Special Season

The paradise shelduck special season was introduced in response to high numbers recorded during the summer moult count with the purpose of dispersing birds post moult. Initially, the season was only open to junior hunters but was extended to all licence holders in 2019 as numbers remained high.

Harvest Monitoring: Through a gamebird harvest phone survey, conducted in the same manner as the main season harvest survey, it was estimated that approximately 770 paradise shelduck were harvested during the special season. In comparison, an estimated 11,650 birds were harvested during the main season, meaning the special season accounted for approximately a 6.6% increase in the overall harvest.

Survey Feedback:

The most common comment was that the bag limit was too low to justify going for a summer hunt. Some hunters also noted they would not support extending the season later, due to concerns it might impact the main season. Current regulations appear relatively conservative and are helping maintain high paradise shelduck populations. Nearly 70% of hunts reached the bag limit, and the frequent feedback that the bag limit is too low suggests that increasing it could significantly boost harvest by allowing more birds per hunt and improving overall participation. Very few hunters participated on more than one day, indicating that extending the season length is unlikely to substantially increase participation.

Table 3: *Neighbouring regions regulations for Paradise shelduck special seasons*

| Region | Bag Limit | Season |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Otago | 5 | 7 March to 15 March |
| Central South Island | 15 | 7 to 8 and 14 to 15 Feb |
| West Coast | 15 | 28 Feb to 22 March |
| Southland | N/A | N/A |

Neighbouring Regions Regulations

Otago is not aligned with any neighbouring regions in either bag limits or season lengths for the summer/special season for paradise shelducks. The West Coast has a bag limit of 15, the same as their regular season, while the Central South Island has a bag limit of 15, which is 10 birds fewer than their regular season. Otago's season dates overlap with the West Coast, although Otago's season is longer, while the Central South Island's special season occurs over two weekends, a month before Otago's season. Southland does not currently have a paradise shelduck special season. The Otago summer season does not occur in summer, but early autumn, it should be appropriately renamed.

Proposed changes: Increase Summer season paradise shelduck limit to be in line with regular season bag limit (12 or 15) with the exception that the summer season be cancelled should the population fall under 16,000 during aerial moult counts. Consider renaming to special paradise duck season.

Increasing the bag limit to match the regular season simplifies the regulations while providing more “worthwhile” opportunities for hunters, based on feedback received. With the paradise shelduck population still increasing, this change provides additional hunting opportunities and helps increase overall participation, while also assisting with moving birds off post-moult areas. The 16,000-bird threshold carried over from the previous gazette provides a safeguard, offering protection in case the population declines.

Australasian shoveler / kuruwhengi

Harvest Monitoring Since 1993, there has been a downward trend in the total number of shoveler harvested in the Otago Region (Figure 7). For the 2025 season, an estimated 240 shoveler were harvested, continuing the decline from 2024 when an estimated 600 were taken. This trend is consistent with patterns observed across other regions and nationwide. However, the decline should not be interpreted as a clear indication of a population decrease, as it is more likely the result of several factors, particularly changes in hunting practices and regulation shift to a one drake bag limit.

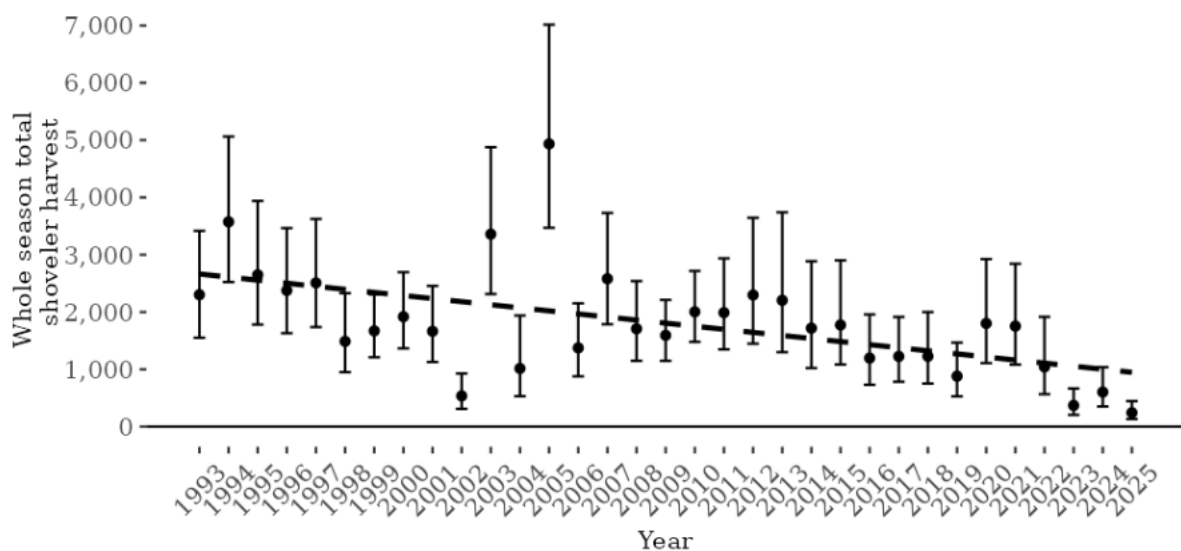


Figure 7: Whole season total shoveler harvest in the Otago Region. Long-term trend linear shown as a dotted line.

Population Monitoring: Shoveler are counted as part of the national population index, as they are considered a national species. All long-term indices from the national report indicate that the shoveler population is stable. The two-year population change from the 2023 to 2024 count suggest a small decrease however the upper confidence interval is approaching zero. (McDougall, 2024). In Otago the number of shoveler is below the long-term mean (Figure 8).

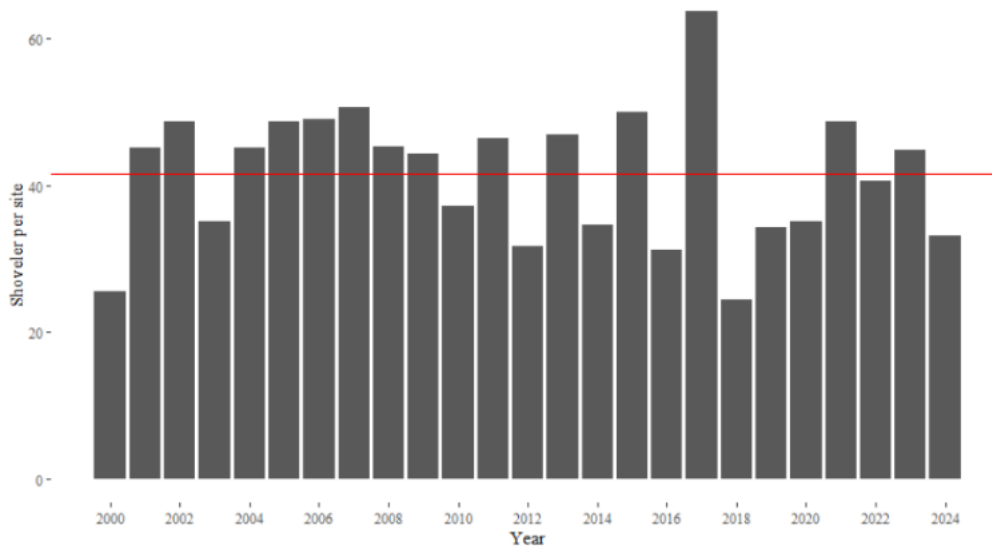


Figure 8: Average number of shoveler per Otago site. Long term mean shown in red.

Table 4: Neighbouring regions regulations for Shoveler

| Region | Bag Limit | Season |
|----------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Otago | 1 Drake | 3 May to 27 July |
| Central South Island | 2 | 3 May to 27 July |
| West Coast | 2 | 3 May to 27 July |
| Southland | 1 Drake | 3 May to 13 July |

Neighbouring regions regulations

Otago's season limits are aligned with all neighbouring regions except Southland, where the season ends two weeks earlier. Both the Central South Island and West Coast regions retain a bag limit of two shovelers, while Otago and Southland allow the harvest of only one drake.

Proposed: No Change

Measures implemented in 2023 to reduce the shoveler harvest are recommended to be maintained for three to five years to monitor the effectiveness of the bag limit reduction at reducing shoveler harvest and the resulting impact on population dynamics.

Black Swan / Kakiānau

Harvest Monitoring:

For the 2025 season, an estimated 772 black swans were harvested in Otago, accounting for just over 1% of the total game birds taken in Otago. This is a decrease from the unusually high 2024 harvest of 1,740 birds, which was more than triple the 570 harvested in 2023 and partly influenced by a small number of exceptionally successful hunters.

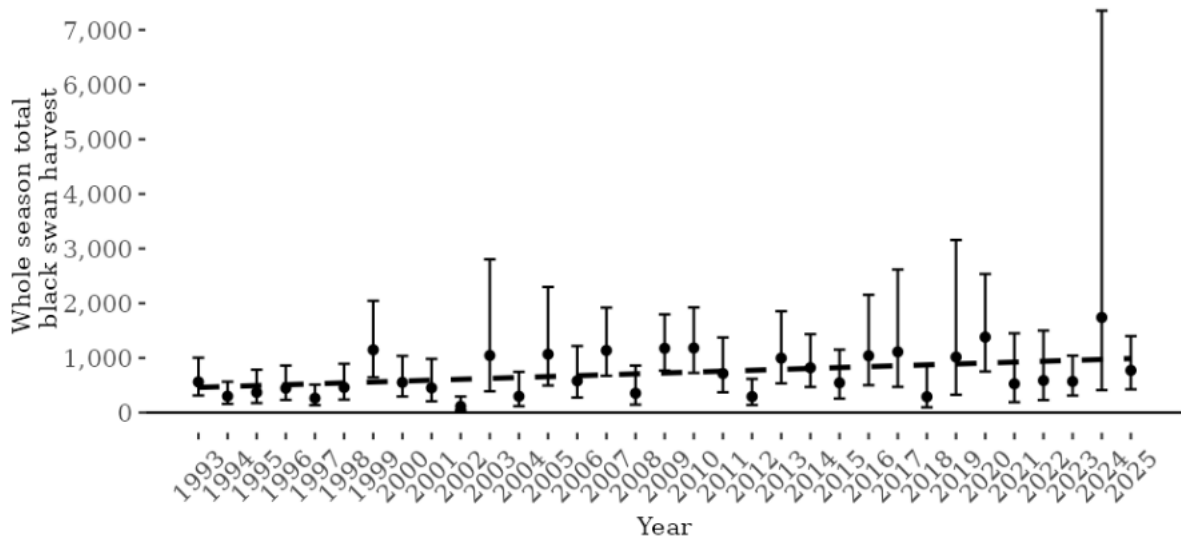


Figure 9: Whole season total black swan harvest in the Otago Region. Long-term trend line shown as a dotted line.

Population monitoring:

In 2025, a total of 2,621 black swans were recorded during the aerial moult counts. This represents a decrease of 2,161 birds compared with 2024, which saw the highest count on record (4,784), but a slight increase from the 2,562 recorded in 2023. Overall, numbers declined across the East Coast, Ida/Mānuherekia and Dunstan sub-region, as well as in South Otago. In contrast, increases were observed in the Maniototo, Queenstown, Strath Taieri, and Upper Clutha sub-regions. The long-term aerial moult count trend across Otago is of an increasing population (Figure 9).

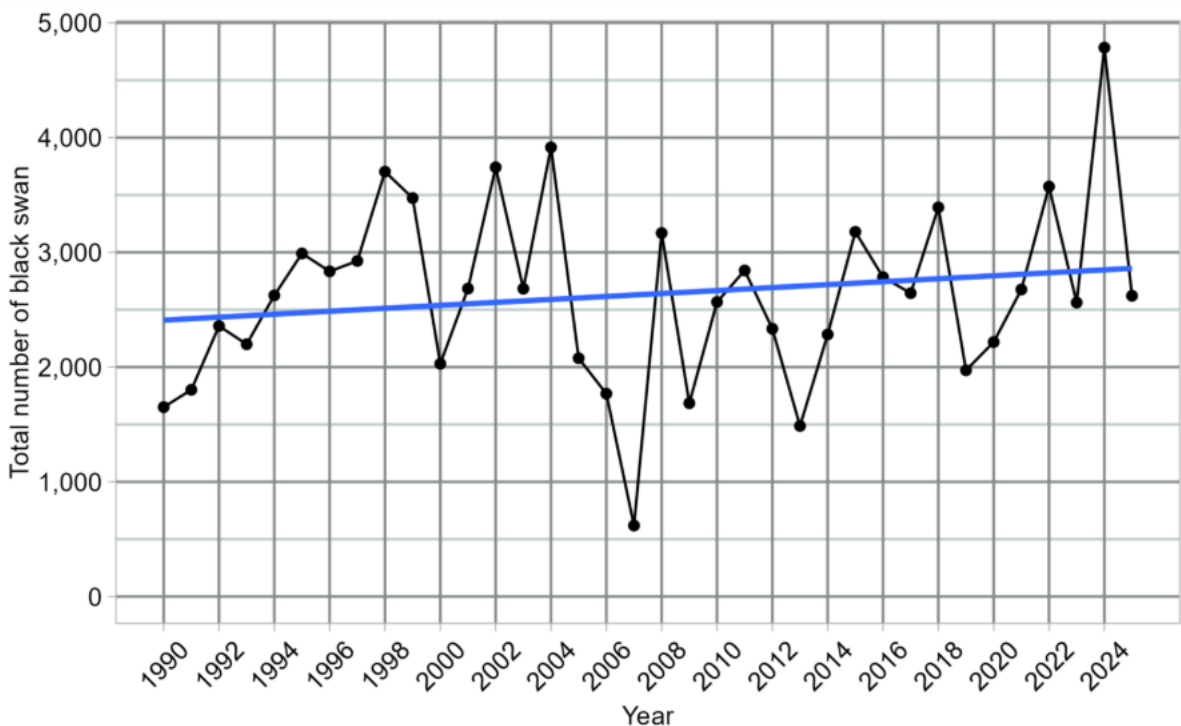


Figure 10: Long-term (1990-2025) count totals for black swan. Long-term linear trend shown in blue.

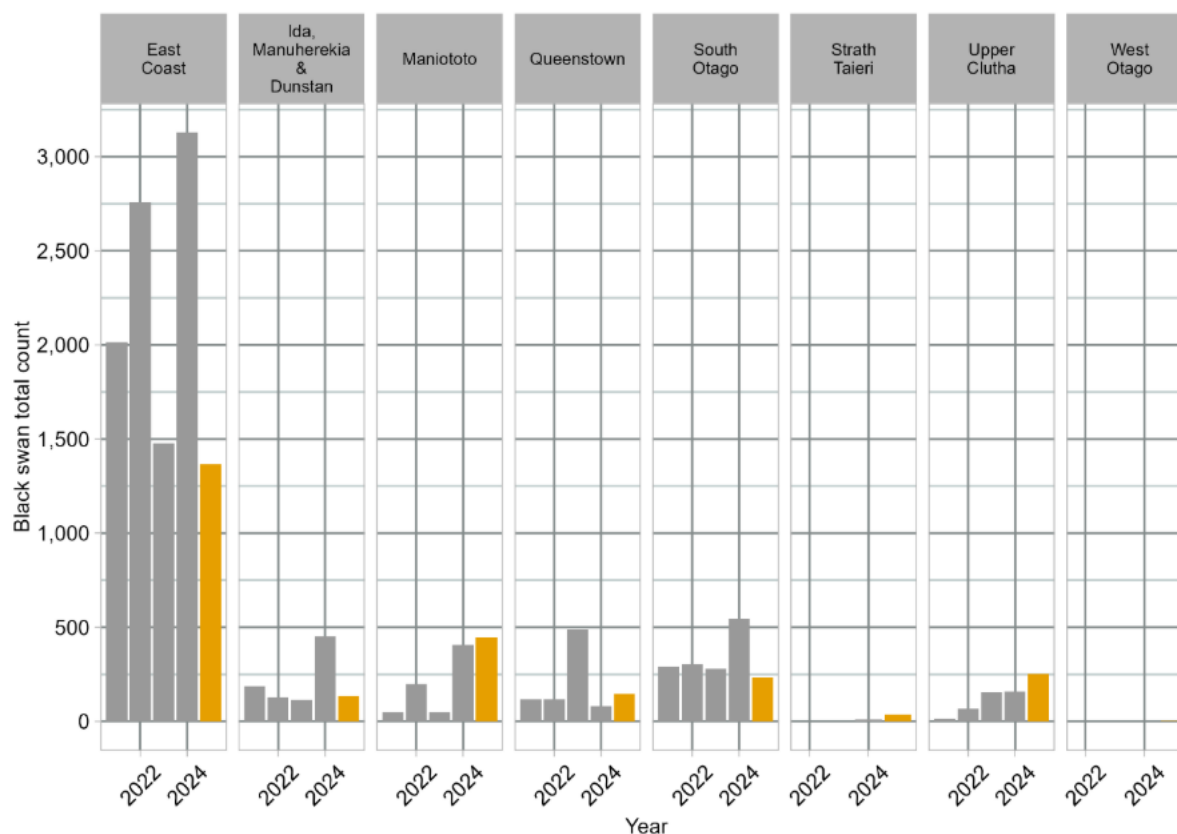


Figure 10: Count totals for black swan per subregion (2021-2025)

Table 5: Neighbouring regions regulations for black swan.

| Region | Limit | Season |
|----------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|
| Otago | 10 (0)* | 3 May to 31 August (Closed)* |
| Central South Island | 5 | 3 May to 27 July |
| West Coast | 4 (4) | 3 May to 27 July (28 Feb to 22 Mar) |
| Southland | 5 | 3 May to 13 July |

Closed Season for Swans upstream of the Clyde dam (Area A)*

Proposed: No Change.

The black swan bag limit was raised in 2022 to help address crop and pasture damage in areas where black swans congregate in large numbers during spring. This adjustment does not appear to have impacted the overall population. If the population continues to rise and complaints increase; a further review of the bag limit may be recommended. However, there is not currently data to conclusively support opening of the swan season in area A (above the Clyde Dam).

Pūkeko

Harvest Monitoring: there is no Pūkeko harvest monitoring data as the Pūkeko season is closed.

Population monitoring: The data collected at both historical and newly introduced sites indicates fluctuations in Pūkeko numbers, with some areas showing increases while others

remain stable or decline. The observation of Pūkeko colonizing new areas suggests a potential overall increase in the regional population.

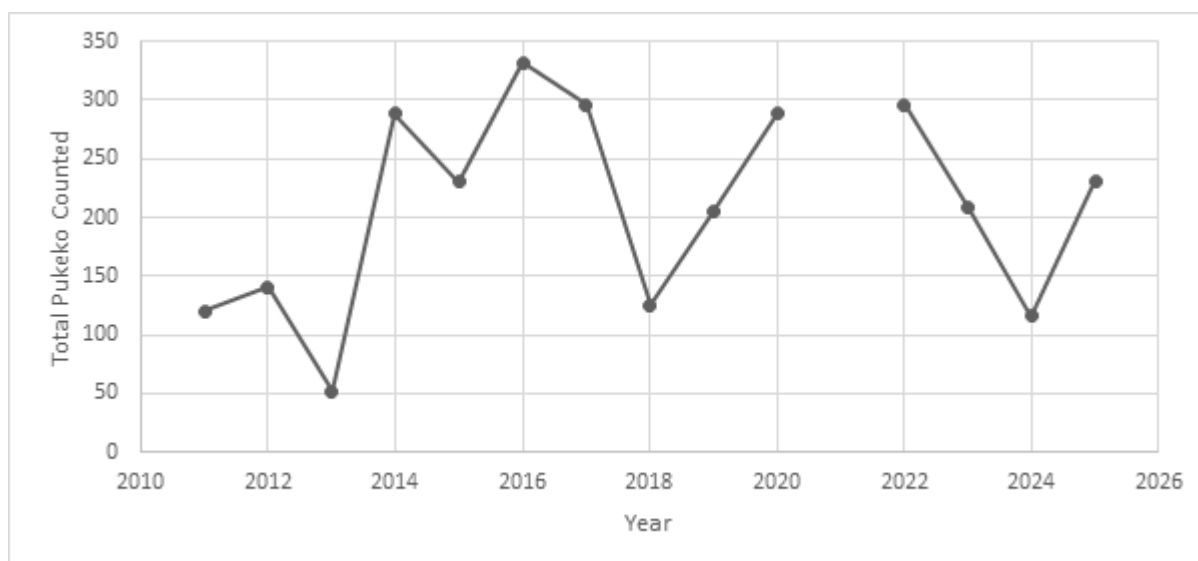


Figure 10: Long-term (2011-2025) count totals for Pūkeko. 2021 unrecorded due to Covid.

Table 6: Neighbouring regions regulations for Pūkeko

| Region | Limit | Season |
|----------------------|---------|------------------------------------------|
| Otago | 0 | Closed Season |
| Central South Island | 10 | 3 May to 27 July |
| West Coast | 20 (20) | 3 May to 27 July (1 January to 22 March) |
| Southland | 0 | Closed Season |

Neighbouring region regulations

Otago is aligned with Southland in both season length and bag limits. In contrast, the main Central South Island (CSI) and West Coast season lengths align with each other. The West Coast also has a pūkeko summer season running from 1 January to 31 March. Central South Island closes its season on the same day as the waterfowl season, at the end of July. Bag limits differ between regions: the West Coast allows 20 pūkeko per season, while CSI permits only 10.

Proposed change: No Change

Due to the lack of significant population growth, there is no scientific justification to open a pūkeko season.

Upland Game

Population monitoring: due to upland gamebird hunting in Otago occurs almost entirely on privately owned land, systematic population monitoring is not undertaken within the region. Instead, harvest monitoring provides the primary source of information on upland gamebird abundance and trends over time.

Cock Pheasants

The 2025 season marks the first time in five years that pheasant harvest has been recorded in Otago. Harvest levels are generally so low that they are not detected in surveys; however, there was a bump this season with an estimated 152 pheasants were harvested. This is mostly likely due to an individual hunter surveyed skewing the averages.

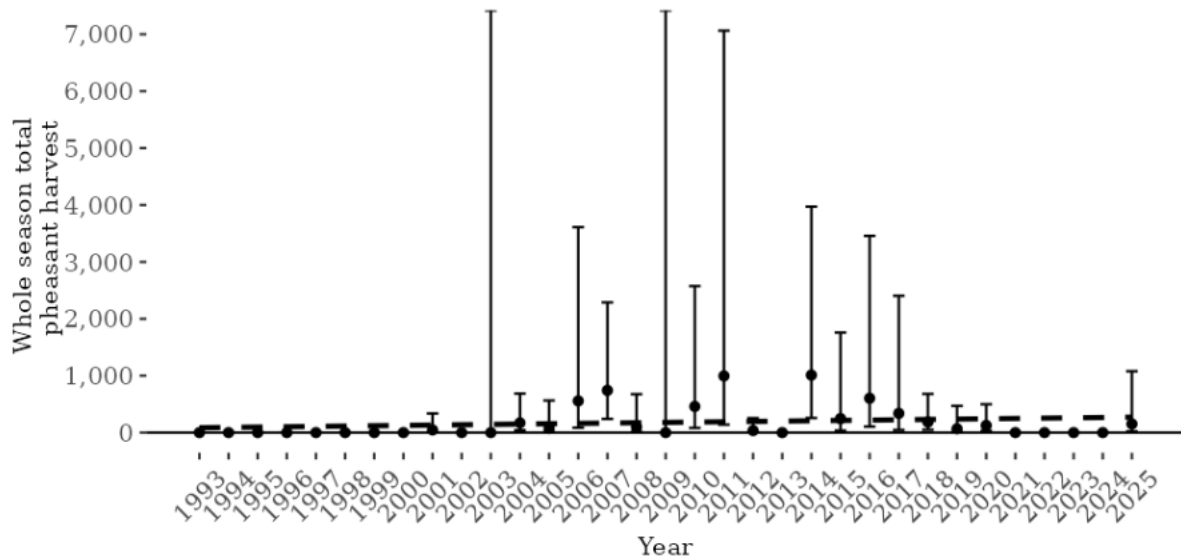


Figure 11: Whole season total pheasant harvest in the Otago Region. Long-term trend linear shown as a dotted line.

Table 6: Neighbouring regions regulations for cock pheasants

| Region | Limit | Season |
|----------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Otago | 5 | 31 May to 31 August |
| Central South Island | 4 | 3 May to 31 August |
| West Coast | 2 | 3 May to 27 July |
| Southland | 5 | 31 May to 31 August |

Neighbouring region regulations

Otago is aligned with Southland in both season length and bag limits. In contrast, both the Central South Island (CSI) and West Coast regions begin their pheasant season a month earlier. Central South Island closes on the same day as Otago, while the West Coast season finishes a month earlier, at the end of July. Bag limits also differ, with the West Coast allowing a maximum of two pheasants per hunter, compared to four in CSI.

Proposed change: No Change

California quail

Harvest Monitoring: An estimated 1,280 quail were harvested in 2025, a decrease of 640 birds from the estimated 1,920 in 2024. While average quail harvests show a very slight increasing trend over time, the past five years have all remained below the long-term mean of approximately 3,000 birds.

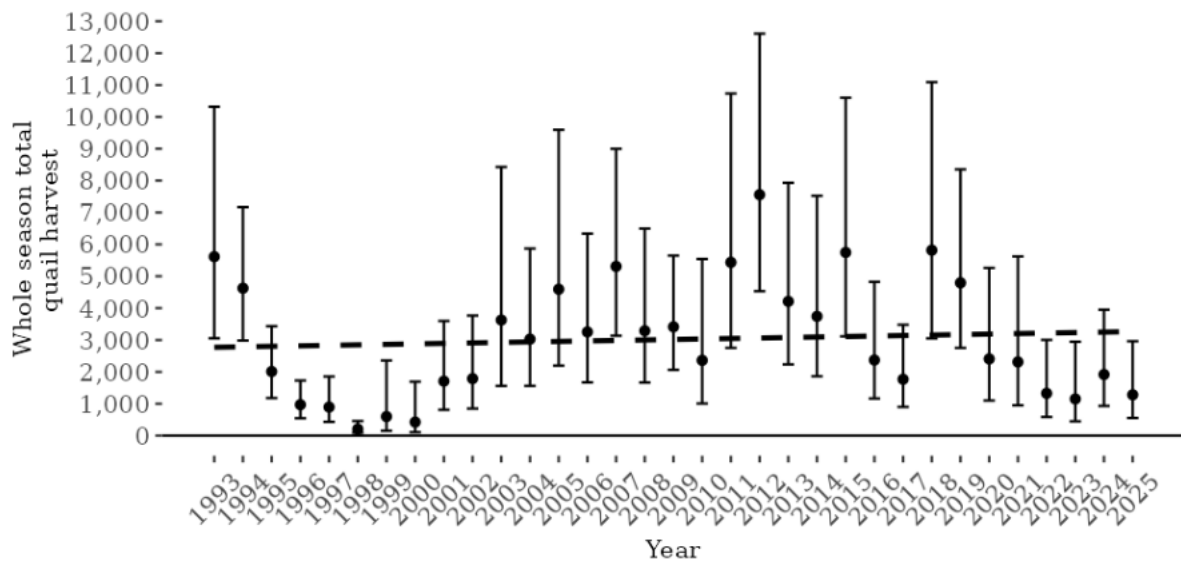


Figure 12: Whole season total California quail harvest in the Otago Region. Long-term trend linear shown as a dotted line.

Table 7: Neighbouring regions regulations for California quail

| Region | Limit | Season |
|----------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Otago | 10 | 31 May to 31 August |
| Central South Island | 10 | 3 May to 31 August |
| West Coast | 0 | N/A |
| Southland | 5 | 31 May to 31 August |

Neighbouring region regulations

Otago is aligned with Southland in terms of season length; however, Otago's bag limit of 10 quail is higher than Southland's. Both Otago and the Central South Island (CSI) have a bag limit of 10 quail, but the CSI season is one month longer, opening at the same time as their waterfowl season on the first weekend of May. The West Coast currently does not have a quail season.

Proposed change: No Change

Chukar

Harvest Monitoring: No chukar have been recorded as harvested since 2020. Harvest levels are generally so low that they are not detected in surveys.

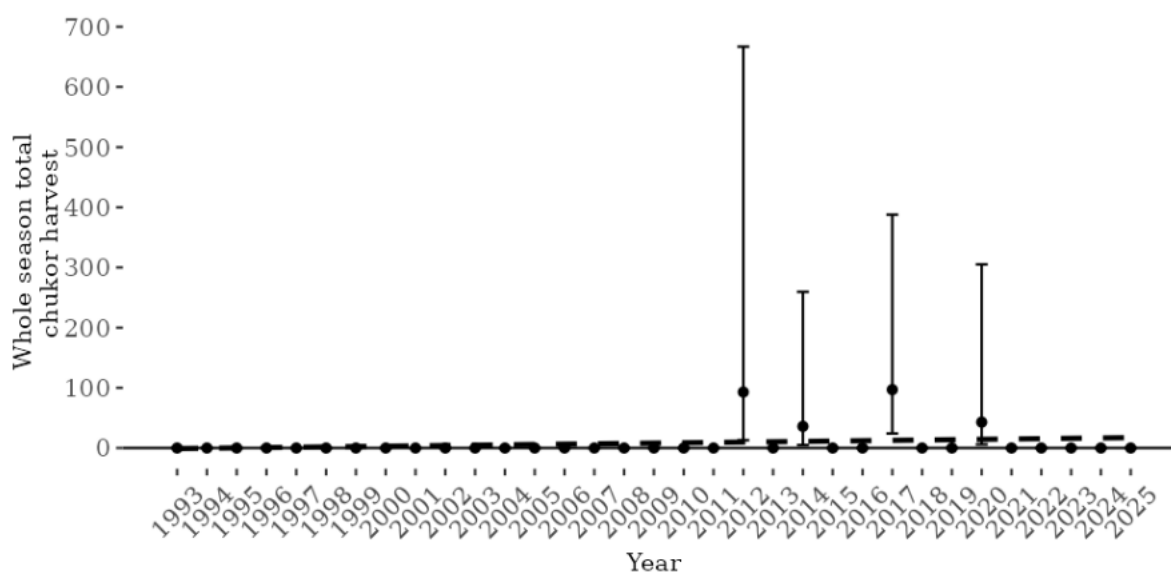


Table 8: Neighbouring regions regulations for Chukar

| Region | Limit | Season |
|----------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Otago | 2 | 31 May to 31 August |
| Central South Island | 10 | 3 May to 31 August |
| West Coast | 0 | N/A not mentioned |
| Southland | 0 | Closed |

Neighbouring region regulations

Otago is not aligned with any of its neighbouring regions. Southland currently has a closed season for chukar, while the West Coast does not mention them in their regulations. The Central South Island (CSI) has a bag limit of **10 chukar** and a season that is one month longer, opening at the same time as their waterfowl season on the first weekend of May.

Proposed change: No Change

Red-legged Partridge

Harvest Monitoring: There is no harvest monitoring data for red- legged Partridge in the Otago region.

Table 8: Neighbouring regions regulations for red- legged Partridge

| Region | Limit | Season |
|----------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Otago | 0 | Closed Season |
| Central South Island | | N/A not mentioned |
| West Coast | 0 | N/A not mentioned |
| Southland | 0 | N/A not mentioned |

Neighbouring Region Regulations

Otago is the only one of its neighbouring regions to mention Red-Legged partridge and that the season is closed.

Proposed Change – Red-legged Partridge Removal

It is recommended that red-legged partridge be removed from the Otago Game Gazette. Maintaining a closed season for a species that is no longer present in the region creates unnecessary complexity and risk of confusion. As naturalised populations have not been reported since the conclusion of the game preserve releases, it is considered more appropriate to omit reference to the species altogether.

Recommendations

1. That the draft 2026-27 game regulations be approved for consultation.

Mason Court

Fish and Game Officer

September 2025

7.4 DRAFT Meeting Schedule 2025-2026

Meeting requirements

The Council has to have a minimum of 6 meetings per year. Attached is a draft Meeting Schedule for your consideration. You will note that meetings have been spread evenly across the year.

Meeting times

To remove any potential conflict between council meetings in Central South Island and Otago, Council voted to move to a **Tuesday meeting**.

Meetings typically run for 3 – 4 hours. I have assumed that a midweek afternoon meeting remains suitable for most Councillors. While moving to an evening meeting is an option, it could result in late-night drives or the need to provide accommodation to ensure the safety of travelling Councillors.

Recommendation

Council adopts the 2026 meeting schedule

Ian Hadland
Chief Executive
9th September 2025

| Date | Tuesday 2nd December 2025 (+AGM) | Saturday/Sunday 24th & 25th Jan 26 | Tuesday 17th March 2026 | Tuesday 19th May 2026 | Tuesday 21st July 2026 | Tuesday 22nd Sept 2026 | Tuesday 2nd December (+AGM) |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Venue | Mosgiel | Mosgiel | Cromwell | Mosgiel | Tapanui | Mosgiel | Cromwell |
| Time | 11:45am Lunch 12:30pm Meeting 3:00pm AGM | 11.45 am Saturday to 1pm Sunday | 11:45am Lunch 12:30pm Meeting | 11:45am Lunch 12:30pm Meeting | 11:45am Lunch 12:30pm Meeting | 11:45am Lunch 12:30pm Meeting | 11:45am Lunch 12:30pm Meeting 3:00pm AGM |
| Planning, Licence fees and Budgets | Adopt Annual Report | Strategic Planning session | Approve draft Operational Workplan and budget | Final Licence fee recommendation | Adopt final OWP and Budget | Approve draft set of accounts for audit | Adopt Annual Report |
| Governance | Chairs report | Risk Mgt Report | | Executive meeting (CE review) | Executive meeting - Finalise CE review | Confirm meeting schedule for following year | Chairs report |
| Regulations | Draft report on Anglers Notice changes | Approve Game Gazette | | Approve Anglers Notice | | | |
| Health and safety | Adopt H&S policy | H&S self Audit report | Bi monthly report | Bi monthly report | Bi monthly report | Bi monthly report | Adopt H&S policy |
| Policy Review and other | | | | | Schedule of legislative compliance | Compliance Guidelines | |

DRAFT Meeting Schedule 2025-26

Proposed for adoption by Council September 2025

Note: Building Opening 10am, 3rd December 2025

Otago Fish and Game Council Meeting 23 September 2025

8.0 Public Excluded Items

8.1 Draft Public Excluded Meeting Minutes 22nd July 2025

8.2 Otago Property Update

8.3 Friends of Bullock Creek Trust Agreement

9.0 Financial Report

Draft Finance and Licence Sales to 31st August 2025

9.1 Finance Reports

The unaudited financial Profit and Loss report and Balance sheet for the period from 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025 for the 2024/25 financial year are below.

The Council is required to **adopt a draft set of accounts** at this point to satisfy the auditors requirements. Please note that these are only a draft and there may be further adjustments made as final accounts are settled by both the auditor and accountant. The full audit is planned for early November 2025.

Profit and Loss

Income

Licence Income

Fish licence revenue from the profit and loss statement 31st August 2025 totals \$2,159,590 (Fish sales \$2,114,618 + Designated Water licence \$44,972) compared with \$2,092,585 for the same period of the 2023/24 season. Licence revenue is ahead 2023/24 season by \$67,005. The budget for fish licence sales was \$2,090,400 for the full year.

Central South Island Fish and Game and North Canterbury Fish and Game's Councils have a sea run Salmon Endorsement Project. We have sold 382 Sea Run Salmon endorsements with a value of \$1,660.87 (GST excl). These funds have been returned to them.

All designated water funds from other regions sold by Otago region have now been distributed to regions and ours returned.

Game licence revenue from the profit and loss statement 31st August 2025 totals \$414,537 compared with \$370,260 for the same period of the 2024 season. Game licence revenue is ahead by \$44,277.

The budget for game licence sales is \$380,682 for the full year.

Game Bird Habitat revenue has been returned to the trust. (\$5 per game licence sold)

Other Income

Total other income to 31st August 2025 is \$250,321.

Areas of interest are:

- Clutha Mata-Au Trust – is reimbursed OF&GC work done on the trust research projects.
- Interest - Extra term deposits from the sale of Dunedin office has provided positive interest income, even with falling rates. More accrued interest is to be added from term deposits.
- 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.

- Depreciation recovered on sale of fixed assets is mostly from a vehicle and a 4 wheel drive bike, the rest is related to furniture sales.
- Donations are shown below.
- RMA costs Reimbursed - this is NZC payment Regional Policy Statement work which was approved by NZC. There is no more to claim.

Donations and Grants (not in budget)

| Donation/Grant from | For | Amount GST excl |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Otago Community Trust | Take A Kid Fishing | \$2,900.00 |
| Ricoh | | \$750.00 |
| Bayfield High School | Rod Hire | \$50.00 |
| Anonymous | Happy customer | \$5.00 |
| Clutha Fisheries Trust | Bendigo Reserve | \$15,000.00 |
| Bullock Creek Donation Box | Bullock Creek | \$227.50 |
| Total | | \$18,932.50 |

Expenses

Expenditure at the 31st August for the 2024/25 financial year is \$2,826,851 against a year-to-date budget of \$2,675,036.

The budget was approved before expenses of Dunedin rental and building costs were planned and this includes the cost of the new build.

The main reasons for any variances against budget are:

- Species Management – Hatchery operations was well used but the value stocktake had made the cost look lower.
- Habitat Protection – RMA spending includes that claimed from NZC for Regional Policy Statement work, Clutha Mata-Au Trust expenses do not include staff time. Boths these are reimbursed in the income section.
- Participation – Much of the back country surveys has come from reserves this year. Promotions were taken from communications reserve. Both our events and TAKF are overspent but we gained a Otago Community Trust grant of \$2,900 towards Take A Kid Fishing events to assist with costs.
- Public interface. Liaison and advocacy with stakeholders has come from the communications reserve.
As well as weekly fishing newsletters we have added nonbudgeted fortnightly game hunting news over the seasons.
- Compliance – No court costs this year. Ranger training has not yet occurred.
- Licencing – Commission is made up from 5% agent sales commission and bank fees associated with online sales.
- Council expenses – All council meetings and two extra ordinary meetings have been held, plus a meeting with the minister of Hunting and Fishing. Travel and accommodation cost have increased.
- Planning and Reporting – Accountancy assistance and the audit.

- Over Heads/Administration- Staff expenses – Fringe Benefit and ACC levy are over budget, Unbudgeted staff clothing shirts and jerseys, Staff employment expense is high from assistance in employing new staff members and HR support.
- 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 off site storage.
- Office equipment - Two chest freezers purchased and a gun safe as extras.
- General Expenses – includes bank charges, increased insurance, legal cost for health and safety Bullock Creek and extra payment approved in confidential agenda.
- Approved Reserves Expenses - \$47,113. This is expenditure approved by the council for the Bendigo, Bullock Creek, some Otago Property and RMA Reserves.
- Depreciation – Depreciation year to date is \$55,531.
- Levies to NZC – paid monthly as per budget. \$1,205,887 excl GST.

The profit and loss for the 12 months ended 31st August 2025 shows a surplus of \$1,388,381. This relates to a property sale, reserved for future developments.

Balance Sheet

Bank Funds Position at 31st August 2025

| Bank | Value |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| ANZ 00 Account | \$420,312.92 |
| ANZ 70 Account | \$894,158.81 |
| ASB Account | \$75.57 |
| Cash On Hand | \$50.00 |
| Total | \$1,314,597.30 |

Term Investments as at 31st August 2025

| Investment Bank | Amount | Rate | Maturity |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| ANZ 1002 | \$206,150.14 | 5.15% | 22 th Sept 2025 |
| ANZ 1003 | | | Closed June 2025 |
| ANZ 1005 | \$500,000.00 | 3.95% | 9 th February 2026 |
| ASB 81 | \$217,369.77 | 4.00% | 2 nd February 2026 |
| ASB 82 | \$500,000.00 | 5.40% | 10 th Sept 2025 |
| ASB 83 | | | Closed May 2025 |
| Total | \$1,423,519.91 | | |

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 \$5,404. The total remains after the purchase of a ford ranger truck, computer laptop and drone, less sales of ford ranger truck, a 4 wheel drive bike and office furniture.

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

Liabilities

Total Liabilities at 31st August are \$498,348.

- Accounts payable includes building invoicing
- Other payables include visa card spending, accrued accounting and audit fee expenses and income in advance.
- Employee Entitlements includes \$49,933.81 of outstanding leave entitlements and accrued leave reversal from the previous year.

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 | \$20,510 | \$20,510 | \$0.0 |
| NZC Legal Fund | | | |

Debtors

No doubtful debts from agents.

No doubtful debts in the general accounts

Bank Signatories for Otago Fish and Game Council

It is necessary to have Council endorsement to any changes in signatories so we seek approval for an update of the bank signatories as follows:

- **ANZ Bank – Ian Hadland, Mike Barker, Bruce Quirey, John Cruden** (Removal of Colin Weatherall and Nigel Paragreen. Addition of John Cruden)
- **ASB Bank - Ian Hadland, Mike Barker, Bruce Quirey, John Cruden** (Removal of Colin Weatherall and Nigel Paragreen. Addition of Bruce Quirey and John Cruden)

Equity

Otago Fish and Game Reserves 31st August 2025

| Otago Reserves Movements | Balance 1 st September 2024 | Income (To) Reserve | Note | Outgoing (From) Reserve | Balance 31 st August 2025 |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------|------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Non-resident DW Levy | \$314,913 | \$44,972 | 1 | \$17,801 | \$342,084 |
| Habitat Enhancement & Research | \$22,692 | \$3,830 | 2 | \$3,000 | \$23,522 |
| Bullock Creek Reserve Restricted Reserve | \$1,776 | \$228 | 3 | \$1,978 | \$26 |
| Bendigo Reserve Restricted Reserve | \$22,508 | \$15,000 | 8 | \$4,696 | \$32,812 |
| Priority Consents Reserve | \$34,190 | \$0 | 7 | \$0 | \$34,190 |
| Otago Property Reserves | \$1,008,566 | \$1,994,828 | 4 | \$1,243,704 | \$1,759,690 |
| Priority Plan Changes | \$24,539 | \$0 | 6 | \$5,459 | \$19,080 |
| Communications Strategy | | \$71,302 | 5 | \$2,415 | \$68,887 |
| Total | \$1,429,184 | \$2,130,160 | | \$1,279,053 | \$2,280,291 |

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 \$23,522. Less committed but not yet paid out of \$4,000 so balance of \$19522 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.

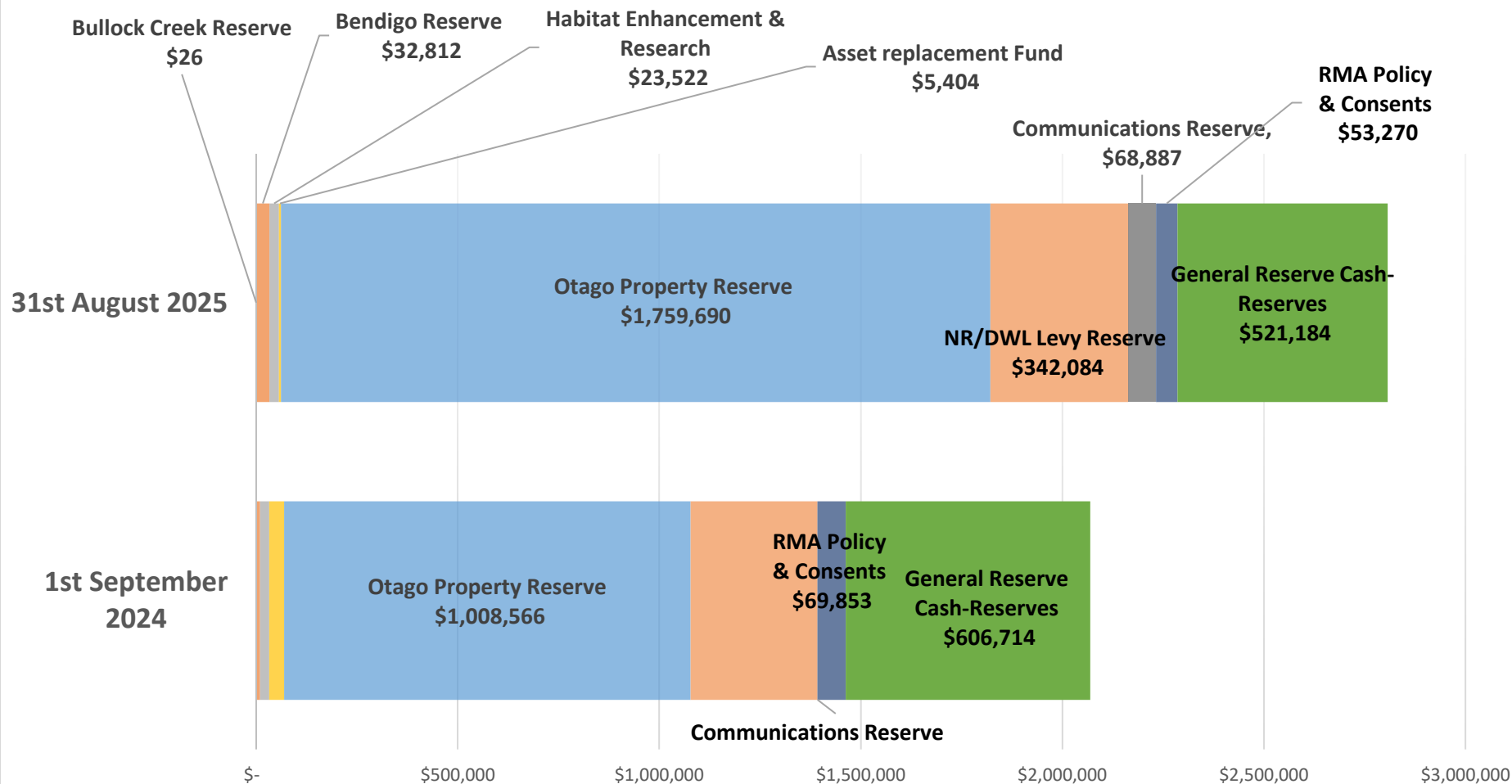
Note 5 Communications Strategy - Council approved September 2024. New Reserve.

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.

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 31ST AUGUST 2025



Balance Sheet

Otago Fish and Game Council As at 31 August 2025

| | 31 AUG 2025 | 31 AUG 2024 |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Assets | | |
| Current Assets | | |
| Bank | 1,314,597 | 1,663,253 |
| Receivables | | |
| Accounts Receivable | 27,486 | 202,738 |
| Total Receivables | 27,486 | 202,738 |
| GST | 89,041 | 32,465 |
| Investments | 1,443,988 | 406,083 |
| Inventory | 33,565 | 27,710 |
| Accrued Interest | 7,106 | 6,523 |
| Total Current Assets | 2,915,782 | 2,338,773 |
| Fixed Assets | | |
| Property Plant & Equipment | 3,019,921 | 2,124,360 |
| Total Fixed Assets | 3,019,921 | 2,124,360 |
| Total Assets | 5,935,704 | 4,463,133 |
| Liabilities | | |
| Current Liabilities | | |
| Accounts Payable | 241,151 | 80,178 |
| Other Payables | 182,509 | 243,926 |
| Employee Entitlements | 74,687 | 90,055 |
| Rounding | - | - |
| Designated Waters other regions | - | - |
| Total Current Liabilities | 498,348 | 414,159 |
| Total Liabilities | 498,348 | 414,159 |
| Net Assets | 5,437,356 | 4,048,974 |
| Equity | | |
| Accumulated Funds | | |
| Accumulated Funds | 3,204,580 | 1,548,016 |
| Current Year Earnings | 1,388,381 | 1,656,565 |
| Transfer (To)/From Reserves | (1,441,300) | (621,979) |
| Total Accumulated Funds | 3,151,662 | 2,582,601 |
| Dedicated Reserves | | |
| Non Resident Levy Reserve | 342,084 | 314,913 |
| Habitat Enhancement & Research | 23,522 | 22,692 |
| Priority Plan Changes Reserve | 19,080 | 24,539 |
| Priority Consents Reserve | 34,190 | 34,190 |
| Otago Property Reserve (was Historical Property Reserve) | 1,759,690 | 1,008,566 |
| Communications Strategy Reserve | 68,887 | - |

Balance Sheet

| | 31 AUG 2025 | 31 AUG 2024 |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Asset Replacement Funding | 5,404 | 37,190 |
| Total Dedicated Reserves | 2,252,855 | 1,442,089 |
| Restricted Reserves | | |
| Bullock Creek Reserve | 26 | 1,776 |
| Bendigo Reserve | 32,812 | 22,508 |
| Total Restricted Reserves | 32,839 | 24,285 |
| Total Equity | 5,437,356 | 4,048,974 |

Profit and Loss

Otago Fish and Game Council For the year ended 31 August 2025

| | JUL 2025 | AUG 2025 | YTD ACTUAL | YTD BUDGET | VARIANCE | % OF YTD BUDGET | ANNUAL BUDGET | LAST YEAR |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Income | | | | | | | | |
| Licence Sales | | | | | | | | |
| Fish Licence Sales | 17,967 | (135,386) | 2,114,618 | 2,090,400 | 24,218 | 101% | 2,090,400 | 2,052,245 |
| Non-Resident Licence Revenue | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1,909 |
| Designated Water Licence Sales | - | 2,955 | 44,972 | - | 44,972 | - | - | 40,340 |
| Game Licence Sales | 633 | 1,205 | 414,537 | 380,682 | 33,855 | 109% | 380,682 | 370,260 |
| Total Licence Sales | 18,600 | (131,226) | 2,574,126 | 2,471,082 | 103,044 | 104% | 2,471,082 | 2,464,754 |
| Other Income | | | | | | | | |
| Wages Reimbursement | - | - | 4,691 | - | 4,691 | - | - | 15,743 |
| Contact Energy Mitigation Income | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 90,868 |
| Clutha Mata-Au Trust | - | - | 93,296 | - | 93,296 | - | - | - |
| Govt Grants | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5,000 |
| Interest Income | 560 | 33,425 | 56,027 | 57,966 | (1,939) | 97% | 57,966 | 59,739 |
| Interest Income Building | - | - | 20,527 | - | 20,527 | - | - | - |
| Fines - Fishing & Game Offences | - | - | - | 500 | (500) | - | 500 | 2,700 |
| Rent Received | 500 | 500 | 7,311 | 42,450 | (35,139) | 17% | 42,450 | 45,207 |
| Fishing Competitions | - | - | 1,287 | - | 1,287 | - | - | 1,119 |
| Depreciation Recovered on Sale of Fixed Assets | - | 476 | 22,751 | - | 22,751 | - | - | 475,880 |
| Donations ,bequests and other Fundraising | 15,983 | 5 | 18,938 | - | 18,938 | - | - | 17,929 |
| Merchandise Sales/Other | - | 2,450 | (110) | - | (110) | - | - | 42 |
| RMA Costs Reimbursed | - | - | 20,537 | - | 20,537 | - | - | 16,990 |
| Sundry Income | 600 | 165 | 1,235 | - | 1,235 | - | - | 2,227 |

| | JUL 2025 | AUG 2025 | YTD ACTUAL | YTD BUDGET | VARIANCE | % OF YTD BUDGET | ANNUAL BUDGET | LAST YEAR |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Diversion - Habitat Enhancement and Research Fund | - | - | 3,830 | - | 3,830 | - | - | 15,100 |
| Total Other Income | 17,643 | 37,021 | 250,321 | 100,916 | 149,405 | 248% | 100,916 | 748,544 |
| Capital Gains on Sale of Assets | 1,390,784 | - | 1,390,784 | - | 1,390,784 | - | - | 1,202,472 |
| Total Income | 1,427,027 | (94,205) | 4,215,232 | 2,571,998 | 1,643,234 | 164% | 2,571,998 | 4,415,771 |
| Gross Profit | 1,427,027 | (94,205) | 4,215,232 | 2,571,998 | 1,643,234 | 164% | 2,571,998 | 4,415,771 |
| Expenses | | | | | | | | |
| Species Management | | | | | | | | |
| Population Monitoring | - | - | 12,236 | 13,000 | (764) | 94% | 13,000 | 9,311 |
| Monitor key fisheries/Research Liaison | - | - | - | 1,000 | (1,000) | - | 1,000 | - |
| Harvest Assessment | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4,200 |
| Hatchery Operations | 2,019 | (31,950) | 1,462 | 10,000 | (8,538) | 15% | 10,000 | (6,597) |
| Releases | - | 191 | 870 | 1,000 | (130) | 87% | 1,000 | 951 |
| Game Bird Control compliants | - | - | 68 | - | 68 | - | - | 2,241 |
| Total Species Management | 2,019 | (31,759) | 14,636 | 25,000 | (10,364) | 59% | 25,000 | 10,106 |
| Habitat Protection & Mngt | | | | | | | | |
| Contact Sports Fish Management Plan | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 50,492 |
| Clutha Mata-Au Trust expenses | 4,988 | 40 | 48,113 | - | 48,113 | - | - | - |
| Resource Mngt Act | - | - | 21,718 | 1,000 | 20,718 | 2,172% | 1,000 | 17,970 |
| Works & Management | 362 | - | 7,271 | 12,500 | (5,229) | 58% | 12,500 | 9,846 |
| Assisted Habitat | - | - | 170 | - | 170 | - | - | - |
| Habitat Enhancement Research Fund Grants | - | - | 2,870 | - | 2,870 | - | - | 21,649 |
| Total Habitat Protection & Mngt | 5,350 | 40 | 80,142 | 13,500 | 66,642 | 594% | 13,500 | 99,957 |
| Participation | | | | | | | | |
| Access and Signage | 365 | 325 | 2,416 | 3,000 | (584) | 81% | 3,000 | 1,061 |
| Back Country Surveys/Monitoring | - | - | 12,801 | 25,000 | (12,199) | 51% | 25,000 | 20,259 |

| | JUL 2025 | AUG 2025 | YTD ACTUAL | YTD BUDGET | VARIANCE | % OF YTD BUDGET | ANNUAL BUDGET | LAST YEAR |
|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Promotion Articles and Advertising | - | - | - | 500 | (500) | - | 500 | 241 |
| Publications and Web Site | - | - | 120 | - | 120 | - | - | 924 |
| OF&G Training Events | 23 | 535 | 2,796 | 2,000 | 796 | 140% | 2,000 | 3,020 |
| Club Relations and Grants | - | 1,076 | 1,975 | 1,000 | 975 | 197% | 1,000 | 1,650 |
| Wetland Reserve Ballots | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 22 |
| Total Participation | 388 | 1,935 | 20,108 | 31,500 | (11,392) | 64% | 31,500 | 27,177 |
| PUBLIC INTERFACE | | | | | | | | |
| Liaison | | | | | | | | |
| Liaison DoC Unin Govt CFT IWI | 24 | - | 63 | 1,000 | (938) | 6% | 1,000 | 41 |
| Total Liaison | 24 | - | 63 | 1,000 | (938) | 6% | 1,000 | 41 |
| Communication | | | | | | | | |
| World Wetlands | - | - | 54 | 200 | (146) | 27% | 200 | 27 |
| Total Communication | - | - | 54 | 200 | (146) | 27% | 200 | 27 |
| Media Releases | | | | | | | | |
| Advocacy Statutory | - | - | - | 500 | (500) | - | 500 | - |
| Weekly Fishing Reports/ social media | 420 | 280 | 5,460 | 6,000 | (540) | 91% | 6,000 | 4,375 |
| Communications Strategy | - | 314 | 2,415 | - | 2,415 | - | - | 15,398 |
| Total Media Releases | 420 | 594 | 7,875 | 6,500 | 1,375 | 121% | 6,500 | 19,773 |
| Total PUBLIC INTERFACE | 444 | 594 | 7,991 | 7,700 | 291 | 104% | 7,700 | 19,841 |
| COMPLIANCE | | | | | | | | |
| Ranger Training and Expenses | - | - | 2,282 | 5,500 | (3,218) | 41% | 5,500 | 2,828 |
| Compliance | - | - | - | 10,000 | (10,000) | - | 10,000 | 8,250 |
| Total COMPLIANCE | - | - | 2,282 | 15,500 | (13,218) | 15% | 15,500 | 11,078 |
| LICENCING | | | | | | | | |
| Designated Waters IT Build | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 21,023 |

| | JUL 2025 | AUG 2025 | YTD ACTUAL | YTD BUDGET | VARIANCE | % OF YTD BUDGET | ANNUAL BUDGET | LAST YEAR |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Agent Servicing | - | - | 137 | 250 | (113) | 55% | 250 | 252 |
| Commission/Fees | 713 | 696 | 89,227 | 98,843 | (9,616) | 90% | 98,843 | 89,251 |
| Total LICENCING | 713 | 696 | 89,363 | 99,093 | (9,730) | 90% | 99,093 | 110,525 |
| COUNCIL | | | | | | | | |
| Elections Council | - | - | - | 500 | (500) | - | 500 | - |
| Council Meetings and Agendas | 2,068 | 163 | 18,511 | 15,000 | 3,511 | 123% | 15,000 | 14,103 |
| Total COUNCIL | 2,068 | 163 | 18,511 | 15,500 | 3,011 | 119% | 15,500 | 14,103 |
| PLANNING & REPORTING | | | | | | | | |
| Reporting/Audit | - | 19,466 | 22,546 | 18,000 | 4,546 | 125% | 18,000 | 16,156 |
| National Liason | 286 | - | 286 | 500 | (214) | 57% | 500 | 266 |
| Total PLANNING & REPORTING | 286 | 19,466 | 22,832 | 18,500 | 4,332 | 123% | 18,500 | 16,421 |
| ADMINISTRATION | | | | | | | | |
| Salaries | 75,741 | 98,013 | 913,870 | 981,843 | (67,973) | 93% | 981,843 | 951,670 |
| Staff Expenses | | | | | | | | |
| ACC Levy | 2,763 | - | 2,763 | 2,500 | 263 | 111% | 2,500 | 1,931 |
| Fringe Benefit Tax | - | 3,468 | 10,126 | 8,000 | 2,126 | 127% | 8,000 | 6,156 |
| Staff Training | 416 | 68 | 8,367 | 8,000 | 367 | 105% | 8,000 | 6,765 |
| Staff Clothing Branded | - | - | 1,581 | - | 1,581 | - | - | 1,358 |
| Staff Personal Expenses | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Staff Expenses | 159 | 2,958 | 7,404 | 8,000 | (596) | 93% | 8,000 | 9,120 |
| Staff Employment Expenses | - | - | 7,458 | 1,000 | 6,458 | 746% | 1,000 | 5,488 |
| Employee Assistance | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 16,000 |
| Total Staff Expenses | 3,337 | 6,494 | 37,698 | 27,500 | 10,198 | 137% | 27,500 | 46,818 |
| Office Premices | 17,574 | 16,721 | 187,871 | 87,689 | 100,182 | 214% | 87,689 | 91,664 |
| Office Equipment | 602 | 80 | 2,877 | 2,000 | 877 | 144% | 2,000 | 3,463 |
| Communications | 1,769 | 1,466 | 17,813 | 23,200 | (5,387) | 77% | 23,200 | 19,740 |

| | JUL 2025 | AUG 2025 | YTD ACTUAL | YTD BUDGET | VARIANCE | % OF YTD BUDGET | ANNUAL BUDGET | LAST YEAR |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| General Exp (incl Insurance) | 71 | 1,146 | 11,303 | 3,600 | 7,703 | 314% | 3,600 | 14,350 |
| General Field Equipment | 1,452 | - | 2,091 | 3,300 | (1,209) | 63% | 3,300 | 2,769 |
| Vehicles | 3,022 | 2,056 | 46,588 | 55,000 | (8,412) | 85% | 55,000 | 51,560 |
| Total ADMINISTRATION | 103,569 | 125,975 | 1,220,111 | 1,184,132 | 35,979 | 103% | 1,184,132 | 1,182,034 |
| Approved Reserve Expense | 9,957 | 7,510 | 47,113 | - | 47,113 | - | - | 43,052 |
| Depreciation | 4,707 | 5,069 | 55,531 | 58,724 | (3,193) | 95% | 58,724 | 56,784 |
| Loss on Disposal | 36,579 | 763 | 37,342 | - | 37,342 | - | - | 1,169 |
| NZ Fish & Game Levies | 100,491 | 100,491 | 1,205,887 | 1,205,887 | - | 100% | 1,205,887 | 1,161,958 |
| University of Otago Research Grant | - | - | 5,000 | - | 5,000 | - | - | 5,000 |
| Total Expenses | 266,571 | 230,943 | 2,826,851 | 2,675,036 | 151,815 | 106% | 2,675,036 | 2,759,206 |
| Net Profit | 1,160,456 | (325,149) | 1,388,381 | (103,038) | 1,491,419 | -1,347% | (103,038) | 1,656,565 |

9.2 Licence Sales

Fish Licence Sales 2024/25 Season to 31st August 2025

See table following for fish licence sales numbers and categories for the 2024/25 and 2023/24 season sales to the 31st August 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), 15,551, LEQs this season compared with 15,439 LEQs to the 31st of August of the season - 112 LEQs ahead of last year.

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

Game Licence Sales 2024/25 Season to the end of the Season

See table following for complete game season licence sales numbers and categories for the 2024/25 and 2023/24 seasons

Sales began on the 13th March. Season prices have increased by \$3 for adults and \$1 for Juniors. The gamebird habitat charge has remained the same at \$5 per licence.

In summary, 2025 game licence sales, in whole season licence equivalents (LEQs), 4,288, LEQs this season compared with 3,940 LEQs of the previous season - 348 LEQs ahead of last year.

Recommendations

- 1. That the signatory changes for ANZ and ASB banks as described above be approved**
- 2. That the Draft set of accounts be approved for Audit**
- 3. That this report be received be received.**

Sharon Milne

Administration Officer

16/09/2025

Otago Region Complete Season Game Bird Licences Sales

| 2025 | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| Sales | GWA | GWJ | GWC | GDA | GDJ | Total | Game LEQ |
| Public | 1042 | 166 | 76 | 61 | 2 | 1347 | 1,087 |
| Agency | 3148 | 244 | 94 | 25 | 1 | 3512 | 3,201 |
| Total | 4190 | 410 | 170 | 86 | 3 | 4859 | 4,288 |

| 2024 | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| Sales | GWA | GWJ | GWC | GDA | GDJ | Total | Game LEQ |
| Public | 766 | 111 | 58 | 76 | 5 | 1016 | 803 |
| Agency | 3088 | 229 | 80 | 23 | 0 | 3420 | 3,137 |
| Total | 3854 | 340 | 138 | 99 | 5 | 4436 | 3,940 |

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

Otago Region Fish Licence Sales to the 31st August of the Season

2024/25

| Sales | FWFA | FWA | FWNA | FSLA | FLAA | FWIA | FLBA | FSBA | FDA | FDNA | FWJ | FWNJ | FDJ | FDNJ | FWNC | FDNC | SRSE | DWLR | DWLN | Total | Fish LEQ |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| Public | 2029 | 2628 | 625 | 364 | 424 | 216 | 45 | 568 | 3201 | 3110 | 806 | 71 | 450 | 191 | 32 | 129 | 0 | 1616 | 655 | 17160 | 8,894 |
| Agency | 1768 | 2613 | 214 | 816 | 156 | 117 | 24 | 166 | 556 | 790 | 456 | 28 | 63 | 74 | 8 | 52 | 382 | 1160 | 269 | 9712 | 6,657 |
| Total | 3797 | 5241 | 839 | 1180 | 580 | 333 | 69 | 734 | 3757 | 3901 | 1262 | 99 | 513 | 265 | 40 | 181 | 382 | 2776 | 924 | 26873 | 15,551 |

2023/24

| Sales | FWFA | FWA | FWNA | FSLA | FLAA | FWIA | FLBA | FSBA | FDA | FDNA | FWJ | FWNJ | FDJ | FDNJ | FWNC | FDNC | SRSE | DWLR | DWLN | Total | Fish LEQ |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| Public | 1939 | 2392 | 601 | 375 | 365 | 173 | 42 | 451 | 2918 | 2591 | 594 | 48 | 459 | 166 | 26 | 100 | 0 | 1531 | 644 | 15415 | 8,126 |
| Agency | 2074 | 2955 | 217 | 755 | 153 | 106 | 19 | 171 | 582 | 830 | 393 | 14 | 76 | 57 | 12 | 48 | 512 | 1397 | 138 | 10509 | 7,313 |
| Total | 4013 | 5347 | 818 | 1130 | 518 | 279 | 61 | 622 | 3500 | 3421 | 987 | 62 | 535 | 223 | 38 | 148 | 512 | 2928 | 782 | 25924 | 15,439 |

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

10.0 Chief Executives Report

10.1 SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Monitor Fisheries

Salmon spawning surveys from the Upper Clutha have been reported to this meeting and staff will do a short presentation on the results. Monitoring of Southern lakes is also being reported to this meeting. (see Acoustic Monitoring report). Both of these projects will continue in the current financial year.

Gamebird Monitoring

Shoveler and Pukeko monitoring have been completed and are reported to this meeting. The results, alongside harvest information, is to help guide the Council and inform decision making for the Game Regulations.

Regulations

The triennial review for the gamebird gazette notice has begun with initial correspondence being distributed seeking early feedback, including to iwi. There has been no feedback to date so staff have generated a draft set of regulations for the upcoming season. These will need to be signed off at the January Council meeting at the latest.

Species Interaction

We have been supporting the Clutha Fisheries Trust in trying to bring together a group of practitioners and academics to discuss future galaxiid protection in Otago. That is now scheduled for February.

At the last meeting the ORC report on galaxiid protection in Otago and trout removals was received. Mr Peter Ravenscroft will present his findings to the council at this meeting and seek an extension to the trout removal permit which is part of the programme.

Harvest Assessment

Staff have completed calls to hunters this year as part of the national harvest survey, and a summary of the additional questions asked will be presented ahead the meeting. The harvest report itself is also presented for your background information.

Hatchery Operations

Liberations to authorised waters including reservoirs have begun. To ensure we have adequate cover for hatchery operations, a Cromwell based staff member is being trained in fish culture and transportation.

10.2 HABITAT PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Mata Au Sportsfish and Habitat Trust

As you know, our staff have been contracted to undertake a number of salmon related projects on behalf of the Trust and these have been reported in this agenda. The trust is moving into its pre-construction phase for a hatchery at Roxburgh and the complexity of establishing a hatchery, both legally and physically, is becoming clearer.

RMA (Resource Management Act) planning and Consents

See separate report

Two fast-tracked consent applications are generating a lot of interest. Santana Minerals application we have a watching brief on as agreed at the last Council meeting. The Second relates to a proposal to lower the operating range of Lake Hawea by 2m and a further 6m under extraordinary circumstances. This has implications for fisheries (which are quite difficult to quantify) , access and boating.

Hawea public meeting – Staff & Cr update

Bendigo Wildlife Management Reserve

The Bendigo management plan has been submitted to the ministers office and we await a reply. In the meantime rabbit control and further planting is taking place and will continue into the spring. The generous funding from the Clutha Fisheries Trust is greatly assisting with the provision of tree shelters and plant pest control items.

10.3 USER PARTICIPATION

Designated Waters Implementation

The Designated Waters monitoring is complete for the season and reported here. Use of our controlled fishery has again been light and consideration might be given to reviewing the controlled fishery status in the next Anglers Notice Review.

Access

Staff have been reviewing current access points and looking for gaps in the access network to rivers and lakes. The database of access is progressively being updated added to the access layer (web map) which appears on the home page of the F&G website.

Newsletters

The Fish & Game magazine has been delivered to last years licence holders. It is notably thinner than previous years but has been well received.

Weekly river reports distributed via email will begin shortly and while it's a body of work to keep it going throughout the angling season, it has very good open rates. The content has been excellent and well received in the past.

10.4 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Media

Articles on social media content continue to attract good audiences and positive feedback. This has been especially the case for our learn to fish classes. I have heard no negative feedback on the new building media release which went out after the last meeting of Council which is positive.

Communications Strategy

The communications implementation plan is presently being followed and an interim report is provided. The output has been strong across all of our priority areas and staff propose to continue with the agreed implementation plan into this financial year.

10.5 COMPLIANCE

Prosecutions

All offences for the year have been resolved via diversion with no cases progressing to court hearings.

The NZC is consulting on ***Infringement Notice Policy***. I have completed the analysis of this and circulated that to councilors already. The national policy is necessary in order for the Minister to approve F&G's ability to use that as an option. I have included a separate paper on the matter in the *inward correspondence from NZC* in this agenda. There has been some confusion over the second round of consultation on the ***National Prosecutions Policy*** but it seems there have been minor tweaks to that after guidance provided by the Solicitor General.

10.6 LICENCING

Licence Sales

Fishing licence went on sale at the start of September and are slowly moving. Sales volumes will increase closer to the 1st October.

Family Licence Changes

The NZC resolved to change the family licence structure, and the Minister approved these changes in July, including a late and un-consulted amendment requiring that every licence must now name a child on the family licence. This has generated significant adverse feedback from adult partners who no longer qualify because they do not have a child or grandchild

under 18. The change is expected to further reduce sales revenue, encourage licence category switching, and most likely decrease female participation—the very outcome the change was intended to improve. This is particularly frustrating, as Otago (and other regions) raised these exact concerns in submissions to NZC and requested that the changes be delayed until its impact could be better assessed and modelled.

CE to update

10.7 COUNCIL

Next Council Meeting

The next Council meeting is on 2nd December 2025 at the new F&G office in Mosgiel. It is also the AGM where the final audit and annual report will be presented. Councillors should plan to stay in Dunedin overnight and attend the opening of the new F&G office the following day at 10am.

New Office for F&G Otago

As previously advised, the builders are hoping to hand over the new office building in the 1st week of October. This is fully 5 weeks head of schedule and the project remains on budget. The office fit-out, including technology and furniture, is well underway and coming in below the budget previously provided to Council. Attention will need to turn to some landscaping and perhaps that can be funded, at least initially, from the fit-out allocation agreed from reserves at the last meeting.

As the project comes to a conclusion, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to **Cr Weatherall** for his supporting me throughout the project including regular attendance at our fortnightly meetings with the builder. His experience has been invaluable, and he consistently raised the right questions at the right time.

Office move - The shifting plans are well underway with a scheduled moving date of the 22nd October, and a full exit from the Hanover Street building by the end of October. There is a considerable amount to do and coordinate over the next month but at this stage it is running to plan.

CE to update

Property Update

(see separate report in confidential agenda)

10.8 PLANNING AND REPORTING

Audit

The auditors have made contact and confirmed they will complete our financial and performance audit in the first week of November. Preliminary questionnaires have already been completed and returned to BDO. Only action for Council at this stage is to adopt a draft set of accounts for auditing. That is covered in the finance report.

Recommendation

That this report be received

Ian Hadland

Chief Executive

Sept 2025

Moved:

Seconder:

Carried/Not carried

11.0 RMA Planning and Consents Report

15 July – 14 September 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 mediated. However, I can relay that the mediation sessions have wrapped up and the remaining mediation work is in sorting paperwork to go to the Court.

Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025

On 20 August 2025 the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025 underwent royal assent.

Key changes affecting freshwater within this Act are:

- Permitted activity rules about discharges: Amended section 70 to allow for a permitted activity rule to be put in place where there are significant adverse effects on aquatic life so long as the rule includes standards for the activity and Council is satisfied that the standards will contribute to a reduction in effects over 10 years.
- Freshwater farm plans: relaxed the need for certification of farm plans and allows the minister to identify industry bodies to undertake the certification process.
- Pause on plan or plan change notifications until 31 December 2027: The provisions relating to plans or plan changes giving effect to the National Policy Statement 2020 (**NPS-FM**), which already created a moratorium on notification until the end of 2025 or a new NPS-FM has been released, have been updated to reflect this new date.

The Act also has Otago specific rules to address critical issues related to the forced delay on notifying the Land and Water Regional Plan. This delay created a loophole that allowed deemed permits which had been put onto a short-term consent to apply for consents with durations of up to 35 years in the coming years. It also meant that agricultural discharge standards from Plan Change 6A that the ORC considers to be unenforceable would come into effect. The Act's changes address this by:

- Further extending the short-term abstraction permit timeframes by another 5 years.
- Deleting policies and rules relating to discharge standards.

Critically, these changes leave Otago with very little or significantly delayed regulation around key issues affecting freshwater. Water abstraction was to be addressed by 2021 but many consents will now be in a holding pattern until 2031. Discharge standards were notified in a 2013 plan change and would come into force in 2020. These were extended by Plan Change 6AA with the intent of creating a workable discharge regulation in the Land and Water Regional Plan in 2024 but with this Act, they are removed altogether.

River Engineering Global Consent

The Otago Regional Council (**ORC**) has been issued with a global consent for river engineering works, including gravel extraction throughout Otago. In the past, staff have seen such consents misused to the detriment of aquatic ecosystems and fisheries. However, they do significantly reduce the procedural burden of applying for consent for each river engineering project. Fish & Game was part of an extensive consultation process, alongside other affected parties, which tried to resolve these two issues. The ORC's proposed solution was to create a collaborative river engineering process where the parties get together annually to discuss upcoming river engineering work, using a te mana o te wai perspective. It is hoped that the trust built by working together will allow for future issues to be resolved more efficiently and with better outcomes for those affected.

Staff are due to hold the first meeting with the ORC and other parties on this consent in the coming weeks.

Current Notification Processes

| Applicant | Activity | Outcome |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Otago Regional Council Notifications | | |
| Oceana Gold (New Zealand) Limited | For the site-wide expansion of mining activities at Macraes Gold Mine, including the discharge of contaminants to the Taieri, Shag and Waikouaiti catchments. | A neutral submission was written by staff which provides helpful information to help inform a decision maker. Key points involved dealing with uncertainty, properly considering cumulative effects and managing the extremely long timeframe for adverse effects (200+ years). Staff made contact with Oceana Gold prior to the submission being made so it was not a surprise. |

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

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

Recommendation:

- 2. That this report be received.**

Nigel Paragreen

Environmental Officer

14 September 2025

12.0 Committee & Delegate Reports

12.1 New Zealand Fish and Game Council

NZ Fish and Game Meeting #176 Summary of Decisions Made by the Council and Reports Received

1. Health and safety Report

Some regions have recommended to Councils that staff should be offered flu vaccinations at a cost of \$30 (average) for those who are not eligible for free vaccinations. It is recommended that all councils should offer this to staff.

2. Anglers Notice and Game Bird Notice

Ros Connelly, the NZC Governance and Policy Advisor tabled a report outlining the process for the enactment of the Anglers and Game Bird Notices. Although the process for completing an Angler's Notice should be well understood, this report provides a useful and summary of the steps needed.

3. Health and safety Audits

The June New Zealand Council meeting resolved to undertake Health and Safety audits of all 12 regional Councils. An auditor has been approached to conduct these audits at a cost of \$5-5,500 per audit. At the time of writing one audit has been completed (Northland) and the meeting resolved to audit 3 more regions in 2025, the West Coast and two larger regions who have still to be approached (Otago is not one of these).

4. Fish & Game Bill Legal analysis

Fish & Game currently has advocacy powers under the Conservation Act to protect and enhance fish and game resources and their habitats. This includes participating in statutory planning processes, appearing before courts and tribunals, and advocating for access. The proposed bill will introduce changes that will affect how we conduct advocacy and enforcement work at both the regional and national levels. Professional legal advice is needed to understand the implications and enable informed participation in the select committee process.

Council agreed to:

1. Fund up to \$15,000 in legal advice for the Fish & Game Bill
2. Agree to actively inform licence holders of the proposals when the bill is available
3. Delegate to the Acting Chief Executive the authority to engage legal counsel and develop communications materials for licence holders.

5. Budget recommendations.

Council resolved to:

- A.) Approve the 8 funding applications to the value of \$293,449 approved from reserves
- B.) Approve the Total Base Budgets of \$12,606,870.
- C.) Approval of the NZC business cases totalling \$386,000 from reserves

6. Infringement Notice System Implementation

Revised version of this report to be forwarded to regions for comment.

7. RMA Fund Update

Held over to be considered at meeting #176 in December

8. New Staff Appointments

Appointment of Corina Jordan as joint F & G and GAC CEO for a fixed term of 12 months and the appointment of Richie Cosgrove to the new position of Chief Operating Officer of F & G

Mike Barker
NZC Otago Delegate

12.1 Clutha Mata Au Sports Fish and Habitat Trust

This is a brief update on Trust activities to the end of August.

1. The AGM and a Trust meeting were both held on 13 August – the AGM documents were circulated to Trustees and Otago Fish and Game and at the Trust meeting that followed I provided a Funding Year Annual report.
2. Following the AGM and Trust meetings a ‘glossy’ Sportsfish Management Programme Annual Report 2025’ was prepared for Contact to provide to ORC as required under Condition 17 of its resource consent (the sports fish mitigation conditions). This report which you all have is also being made available to Fish and Game licence holders by Fish and Game and will be available on the Trust’s website in due course, along with the five project reports.
3. Mike and I travelled to the lower Clutha on 19-20th August and met up with Morgan Trotter for meetings and to look at project sites, visiting the Manuka Island habitat site, the Sanford Kaitangata Hatchery and then the Clutha lagoons on Tuesday before travelling to Gore where Mike and I met with Terry Nicholas and Riki Parata on Wednesday morning and then, accompanied by Morgan, meeting with Craig Simpson and landowners to look at sites potentially suitable for the Pomahaka Water Care Trust habitat project that the Trust is funding. Adrian was also present at this meeting.
4. Overall, it was a very productive trip.
 - Habitat Restorations Aotearoa (the contractor) has commenced some of the work being funded this year on the Manuka Island site. There is potential to expand the restoration area, something that will need to be discussed/agreed by the landowner and well worth the Trust considering for next year.
 - The hatchery visit provided some very useful information that will assist the design and operation of the future Trust hatchery at Roxburgh.
 - The Clutha lagoons project presents some interesting challenges – Morgan has a good understanding of the issues which will be valuable as this project develops.
 - The meeting with Terry Nicholas at the Hokonui Runanga in Gore provided a good opportunity for relationship building and Hokonui is very interested in the idea of a joint venture with the Trust involving the hatchery at Roxburgh.
 - Riki Parata showed us the facility they are using at Matura Falls to capture kanakana and observe their migration, and we were also shown the facility and tanks at the Runanga where they are holding adult kanakana.
 - The meeting with the Pomahaka Water Care went very well but there was no decision to choose a specific site – there is some follow up needed to identify a specific project site which Craig and Morgan will address.

Rick Boyd, Chair

12.3 Ngai Tahu – Paulette Tamati-Elliffe

12.4 Clutha Fisheries Trust – Ian Cole

12.5 Conservation Board -

12.6 Tiaki Maniototo

13.0 Correspondence

13.1 NZC to Otago

13.1.1 Consolidated Annual Report

Feedback to New Zealand Council on Consolidated Annual Reporting

I have reviewed the material circulated on the proposed Consolidated Annual Report (CAR) metrics and quarterly reporting requirements. While we acknowledge the intent - to better demonstrate Fish & Game's collective performance and provide visibility to the Minister and licence holders - I have concerns about the level and frequency of reporting proposed.

Regional Fish & Game Councils already have statutory obligations to produce audited Annual Reports, which are submitted to the Minister. These are the correct and legislatively backed vehicles for detailed accountability. Overlaying an additional quarterly reporting process of this scale risks duplicating effort, adding administrative burden, and diverting staff resources away from frontline F&G and advocacy work.

That said, we should support the principle of developing a set of common metrics across regions. A shared framework will give us consistency, comparability, and a stronger collective story when engaging with the Minister and the public. This work is important, but it needs to be pragmatic and efficient.

Given that the document carries no statutory weight, there is no prescribed timeline for its completion. The necessary information could therefore be collated once the Regional Councils, the Game Bird Habitat Trust, and NZC have finalised their annual reports.

It is also worth noting that NZC had indicated this work would be workshopped with staff ahead of being brought to Councils. Such a process would have been very helpful, as it would have allowed us to identify what can realistically be collected, where regional systems already align, and where unnecessary duplication could be avoided.

I suggest the Council provide feedback highlighting the following points:

- They consider scaling back the metrics to those that are nationally comparable and genuinely useful.
- Adopt an annual (not quarterly) collection cycle, aligned with the existing reporting framework.
- Use existing annual reports as the primary data source, supplemented only where agreed gaps exist.
- Engage regional staff in a proper workshop process to refine metrics before formal adoption.

Ian Hadland
Chief Executive
9 September 2025

Consolidated Annual Reporting

New Zealand Fish and Game Council Meeting 175 – 17 & 18 June 2025

Prepared by: Ros Connelly, Governance and Policy Advisor. NZ Fish and Game Council

Kōrero taunaki - Summary of considerations

Purpose

This item proposes a draft set of metrics for adoption, enabling the preparation of a consolidated annual report for NZC during the 2025/26 financial year. Undertaking a consolidated annual report in 2025/26 will provide a test run of the types and quality of data and information collected across the organisation. This will provide a valuable look at activities and operations across Fish & Game and also help us develop the consolidated reporting framework likely to be required through statute from 2026/27.

Financial Considerations

Nil Budgetary provision Unbudgeted

Risk

Low Medium High Extreme

Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations

That NZC:

1. Approves this set of draft consolidated annual report metrics for consultation with the regions and adoption at the next meeting.

Whakarāpopoto - Executive Summary

2. We aim to provide a consolidated annual report (CAR) to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing, as requested by him, in accordance with the governance review.
3. We envisage that this high-level report will also be helpful for licence holders; therefore, it will need to look visually appealing, as well as convey key information about the organisation as a whole.

Takenga mai - Background

4. The consolidated annual report (CAR) will not be audited.
We are thinking of an up to 20-page A4 size document with lots of visuals and lots of “public good” key Performance Indicators (KPIs) about the organisation.
5. Currently, we have limited metrics that all regions report on that can be easily consolidated.
6. We need to establish metrics per objectives that can be easily consolidated for Reporting to the Minister.
7. In considering the Fish and Game Strategy, the objectives would fall under the following headings:
 - a. Unified & Enduring Organisation
 - b. Attract and Retain Licence holders
 - c. Mana Whenua Connected
 - d. Public Perception & Legitimacy
- 1 Healthy Species, Habitat, & Ecosystems
- 2 Additionally, some metrics classified as corporate are being requested.

Kōrerorero – Discussion

8. We would like each region to collect the information requested in Appendix 1 and report on this quarterly. Ideally, this information will be accompanied by a couple of good news stories with photos.
9. A key part of this work is to showcase the variety of “public good projects” that we lead on an annual basis.
10. Financial information will be collected separately as part of the budget-setting process.
11. Additional information around Health and Safety and compliance will be requested through a system called Mango.

Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga - Considerations for decision-making

Financial Implications

9. This item will be delivered within existing baselines.

Legislative Implications

10. The CAR is not required in 2025/26 by legislation but has been requested through the governance review and the Minister for Hunting and Fishing. This document will not be audited.

Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities

11. The CAR gives us an opportunity to show what projects we are progressing with local iwi.

Policy Implications

12. This work can also be used to give our licence holders a better understanding of some of the key work we do.

Risks and mitigations

13. From 2026/27, it is likely that NZC will be required to provide to the Minister to report to the House, consolidated reporting covering financial information, performance reporting information, compliance information (including actions of enforcement officers), monitoring information and data, matters relating to adherence with corporate policies, including personnel policies (subject to Privacy Act considerations for staff employed by the FGC rather than the NZC).

14. The risk of not undertaking this work is that it will be harder for us to develop a consolidated annual reporting framework when required by statute, as we would have no understanding of the scope or quality of information being collected. By undertaking the CAR in 2025/26 (before the Minister is required to report through to the House), we can identify weaknesses in our data collection methodology and areas of inconsistency or complete gaps. This will allow us to develop a more achievable and robust reporting regime in 2026/27

Consultation

14. Some preliminary conversations with some staff have occurred to put Appendix 1 together. Ongoing discussions can occur to refine the content of the CAR based on feedback from the regions.

15. The details for staff/licence holder and stakeholder surveys need to be worked through, and consultation with managers will be part of that process. There are cost implications associated with doing survey work.

Ngā mahinga e whai ake nei - Next actions

16. Receive feedback from the regions so we can finalise a draft CAR document, and regions can ensure they have systems in place to collect this information.

Appendix 1 – KPIs to collect for the Fish and Game Consolidated Annual Report.

Key indicators table for data collection

| Goal | Performance Measure | Who to provide information annually |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Unified and Enduring | Staff survey questionnaire | NZC comms |
| Numeric | Each region provide number of FTE employed and classification of job type % of time staff spend on work for NZC or collaboration with other regions. | Region |
| Attract and retain licence holders Numeric | Report on access points – increase or decrease in number of access locations Details of activities undertaken to attract new licence holders Details of activities undertaken to attract women and juniors Number of licences checked Report % compliant, number of offences, diversions and number of prosecutions for fishing and hunting ranger services. Narrative about legislation changes to focus infringement work. <i>By category eg volunteer ranger hours / voluntary ranger training / volunteer wetland or planting work etc</i> | Region |
| Numeric | <i>Record make up of licence holders and track changes over time</i> | Kate |
| Number and type of promotion | <i>Report events and activities that we held that promote hunting and fishing to children and families and attendance at events eg sika show, education, kids fishing days, extension resources.</i> | Region |

| Goal | Performance Measure | Who to provide information annually |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Case study of one event and then summary of other events – number of events and number of attendees increase over time | |
| Numeric | <i>Report new access secured or re established</i> | <i>Region</i> |
| Mana whenua connected Storey | Report on initiatives and communication to actively collaborate on projects with Mana Whenua on areas of common interest. Regions to report on iwi engagement and collaboration stories. | Region |
| Public perception and legitimacy Numeric | <i>Participate in public good projects eg catchment groups and wetland management groups etc</i> | <i>Region</i> |
| Story | <i>Report Biodiversity project Eg HBF&G new game bird habitat with Koura liberated in the waterbody. Eg eel relocation work Eg stranded fish</i> | <i>Region</i> |
| | License holder survey – questions tbc (NZC) | NZC annual or triannual survey |
| Healthy Habitats and ecosystems Numeric | Report on Game Bird Habitat monitoring - how do we summarise all the monitoring that has occurred around the country? Harvest metric eg. Number of ducks per hour shot trend information per species. -Consistent method needs to be used – aerial transects number and km flown -Birds banded Number. Number of bands returned from harvest. Picture for each output. | Region |

| Goal | Performance Measure | Who to provide information annually |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pheasant calls /number of sites surveyed shovler / pukeko number of trancets / Km surveyed / number of sites surveyed for Black Swan -Staff hours and time for all of the above -how many wetlands are we managing and total costs -Ha of wetlands that we manage and total costs -Number of wetland restored / created -Ha of wetland restored / created and costs for both of the above. | |
| Numeric | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Report number of rivers / streams where we have conducted Trout spawning habitat monitoring -Number of rivers that we monitor for fish trend information. -Km of drift dives, number of sites, number of Km, and number of staff -Electric fishing, number of rivers, number of sites -Creel surveys -Aerial survey for salmon spawning sites km flown Other eg Boat surveys -Staff hours and time | Region |
| Narrative | <i>Report other species habitat monitoring or collaborations with eg DOC involving indigenous species</i> | Region |
| Narrative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Participate in special responses as required eg Avian Bird flue response</i> <i>Eg Golden Clam response</i> | Region |
| Numeric | <i>Advocate for the maintenance and protection of outstanding water bodies</i> | Region - annual |

| Goal | Performance Measure | Who to provide information annually |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | <i>through water conservation orders – good news storey</i> | |
| Numeric | <i>Report number of consents reviewed, type of consent and what is being sought. Number of district plan comments and what is being sought. Number of Regional plan comments and what is being sought. Number of regional policy statements and what is being sought. Staff time for each and impact fish and game advocacy had on outcomes ie what is achieved</i> | Region - annual |
| Narrative | <i>Report advocacy activity (eg submission writing) relating to the protection and enhancement of sports fish and game bird habitats.</i> | Region - annual |

Background

The New Zealand Council (NZC) has provided both the Infringement Notice Policy and an updated Prosecutions Policy for feedback. The CE has received advice that Otago would not need to submit feedback on either as it had done so already. There is confusion over the status of both documents.

This council has provided feedback a number of times on the Prosecution Policy over the years but I believe this is the first time we have seen the *Infringement Notice Policy* which is required to be nationally adopted before the organisation is able to use an Infringement Notice system.

I have previously circulated the policy to Councillors and my analysis of the potential impacts to Otago.

Timing for responses

The NZC is requesting feedback by October 31st. It is policy to allow two regional meeting cycles when consulting to allow for regions to provide meaningful input onto national policy.

National Prosecution Policy and strategic aims.

Several questions emerge from these papers:

- *How does the current financial model of the infringement system impact Fish & Game's ability to recover the costs of its compliance activities effectively?*
- *What is the true deterrent effect of the infringement system, and how does it compare to a public prosecution model?*
- *Does the centralisation of decision-making align with the statutory functions and operational efficiency of regional Fish & Game Councils?*

Cost recovery

A central issue with the infringement notice system is its financial structure. The policy explicitly states that infringement fees are payable into the Crown consolidated fund, not to Fish & Game. I think NZC sought and received advice from the Solicitor Generals office on this.

From an organisational perspective, this arrangement prevents the organisation from recovering the costs associated with its compliance and enforcement activities. Fish & Game expends significant resources, including ranger time, administrative overhead for managing notices, and database entry and maintenance, on a process that yields no direct financial return. Each I.N. issued essentially represents a cost to the organisation with no return. This renders the system not only financially unrewarding but a net drain on operational resources. Its present diversion payments are directed to a dedicated fund for F&G habitat and research.

Deterrence

The deterrent effect of the I.N. system is fundamentally constrained by its design. Infringement fees are fixed at prescribed (and quite low) levels by regulation and cannot be

altered by the organisation. The policy's goal is to convey the "seriousness of breaching the law" and "ensure future compliance" but the mechanism it employs, a low, fixed fee delivered via a private, administrative notice is insufficient to achieve this for anything other than the most minor offences.

Strategic Alternative

Broadening the prosecution and diversion model is a strategic alternative for serious or recidivist offences. While operationally more demanding, the prosecution model offers strategic outcomes that are fundamentally superior to the I.N. system.

Summary

While prosecution may involve more procedural steps and judicial engagement, its path to achieving the organisation's core goals - cost recovery, public deterrence, and accountability is direct and effective. In contrast, the administrative simplicity of the I.N. is attractive, the effort of pursuing a prosecution is justified by the superior strategic return.

The following table provides a direct comparison of the two models, illustrating why the prosecution and diversion approach offers more compelling outcomes for Fish & Game.

| Criterion | Infringement Notice (I.N.) System | Prosecution/Diversion Model |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cost Recovery | No mechanism for cost recovery; fees paid to the Crown consolidated fund | Court fines or diversion payments offer a path to cost recovery. Funds used for local habitat protection and species research. |
| Deterrence Factor | Low/Private; no public visibility or shame | High/Public; involves court proceedings and potential media coverage [User Query] |
| Penalty Levels | Fixed, prescribed fees set by regulation | Variable, court-determined fine, likely higher than I.N. fee |
| Gear Forfeiture | Seized gear must be returned upon payment | Forfeiture of gear is possible via court order |
| Process Simplicity | Administratively simple; bypasses court for minor matters | Judicial process; more complex operationally but strategically simple |
| Decision-Making | Centralised via CDG for non-trivial matters | Regional-level decision, with legal oversight as needed |

Hybrid approach?

A more effective model would be a more hybrid approach, where the I.N. system is reserved for genuinely trivial offences such as a first-time minor regulations breach. The default response for a broader range of offences, including those that are first-time but serious in nature, should shift to a prosecution and diversion model. This would leverage the administrative efficiency of the I.N. system for its narrow, intended purpose while maximising the significant strategic benefits of prosecution for all other cases.

Feedback

Based on the above, the Council could consider the following response:

- **Policy Review** – reconsider both the prosecution policy and the Infringement Notice Compliance and Enforcement Policy to redefine the roles of the I.N. and prosecution options. The review should aim to establish the prosecution and diversion model as the primary, preferred option for all but the most trivial offences.
- **Cost Recovery and Attribution** - Re-engage in discussions with the Ministry of Hunting and Fishing , and other relevant government bodies to establish a mechanism for infringement notice fees to be directly attributed back to Fish & Game to cover the costs incurred. Alternatively, if direct attribution is not feasible, formally recognise the prosecution and diversion model as the most effective path for cost recovery and allocate resources accordingly.

Ian Hadland

Chief Executive

15th Sept 2025

13.2 Otago to NZC

Nil

13.3 General Correspondence In
13.3.1 OF&GC SFMP To Be Delayed To June 2027

Hon James Meager

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



22 JUL 2025

Adrian McIntyre
Otago Fish and Game Council

JMC-439 / CORM-1618

By email: otago@fishandgame.org.nz

Dear Adrian,

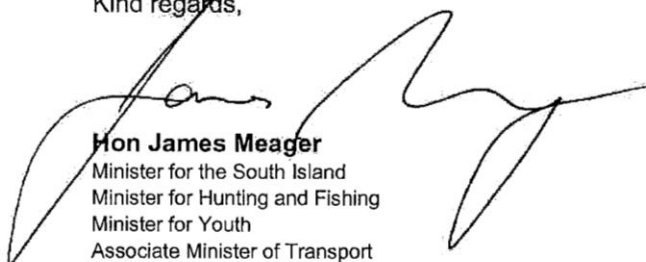
Thank you for your letter dated 17 June 2025, regarding your request to extend the review period of the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan (SFGMP).

I appreciate your efforts to ensure that licence holder funds are used efficiently and your concern that updating the SFGMP now may result in a need for further revision once the new legislation is enacted.

To that end, I agree to your request to extend the deadline for updating the Otago Fish and Game Council's SFGMP to **30 June 2027**.

Thank you again for your proactive engagement. I look forward to receiving the updated SFGMP in due course, and to meeting with the Council on 29 July.

Kind regards,



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

13.3.2 University of Otago – Dr Donald Scott Scholarship Programme

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO
DONALD SCOTT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
2025 DONOR REPORT

University
of Otago
OTAKOU WHAKAHI WAKA

Donor Report for: Patricia Scott, Fish & Game, Clutha Fisheries Trust

On behalf of the students and staff at the University of Otago, we sincerely thank you. Your generosity has played a vital role in advancing our mission, making a lasting impact, and creating life-changing opportunities, none of which would be possible without your support. Thank you for being a part of our journey and for making a difference in the lives of so many.

Report Purpose: to provide an update for the Otago Fish & Game, end of financial year reporting August 31

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Date | 1/8/2025 |
| Donor | Fish and Game Association |
| Tenure | In Perpetuity |
| Opportunity to Review / Future Planning | |
| Recipient/s | |
| 2023 | Isaac Davis - Master of Science in Ecology 2023 - 2025 |
| 2024 | Jasmine Lane - Master of Science in Ecology 2024 - 2025 |
| 2025 | Robert Morgan - Master of Science in Ecology 2025 - |
| Correspondence Included | Student Reports and a Letter of Appreciation |

Scholarship Programme Activity Status for 2024 - 2025:

The Scholarship was awarded in December 2024 to Robert Morgan for 2025
Jasmine Lane (2024) is part way through her project, an interim report has been included
Balance of the Trust Fund at the end of 2024: \$62,634

Financial Status:

| Trust Fund 1773 | Balance as of 31 December 2024 |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Donation Income | \$12,357 |
| Investment Income | \$5,743 |
| Distribution | \$5,000 |
| Year End Balance | \$62,634 |

2024 Fundraising campaign:

At the end of 2024 we sent an Appeal to 214 identified Alumni and Friends asking for support of the Donald Scott Memorial Fund. From this appeal we received four donations to the total of \$2,100.

2025 Recipient Profile:

Robert Morgan was awarded the Donald Scott Memorial Freshwater in Ecology Scholarship. Robert is in his 4th year, studying for a Master of Science in Ecology. He is currently studying part-time in 2025.

Engagement Updates / Outcomes and Outputs

- End of year Report from Isaac Davis 2023
- Interim report from Jasmine Lane 2024

Visibility and Recognition

- Thank-you letter from Robert Morgan 2025

The University of Otago is very grateful for the generous support from the Otago Fish & Game for the Donald Scott Memorial Scholarships. This supports postgraduate students in Freshwater Ecology. Your contribution plays a vital role in advancing research and supporting talented students in this important field. In recognition of your support, the Otago Fish and Game are acknowledged in the University of Otago Foundation Trust Annual Report and feature on the University's Scholarships website.

The regulations include the following wording which is circulated among the Science students studying at Otago:

"Established in 2022 in memory of Donald Scott, former Associate Professor of Zoology, by the University of Otago with funds gifted by Patricia Scott in memory of her husband Donald Scott, the Clutha Fisheries Trust and Otago Fish and Game Council, the Scholarship will support a Postgraduate 4th Year or Honours student with a focus on New Zealand waterways/river ecology that can inform best practice and sustainability for the freshwater Angling and Sports Fishing communities."

Additionally, the name of the scholarship appears on the recipient's academic transcript, as a formal and permanent acknowledgment.

Please note if you are wanting to publish any content from any of the above students' correspondence, please seek approval via the Development & Alumni Relations Office at the University of Otago. Your contact is Angie Hughes, Development Manager, Sciences, email angie.hughes@otago.ac.nz

Angie Hughes, Development Manager, Health Science
Development & Alumni Relations Office, University of Otago
Email: angie.hughes@otago.ac.nz

13.3.3 Audit of Otago Fish and Game Council



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BDO INVERCARGILL
136 Spey Street
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Otago Fish and Game Council
The Council
P O Box 76
DUNEDIN 9016

29 August 2025

Dear Council members

Audit of Otago Fish and Game Council for the Year Ended 31 August 2025

We have commenced our planning for the audit of Otago Fish and Game Council for the year ended 31 August 2025. To ensure the entire audit process goes as smoothly as possible, we would like to provide you with some information about how we intend to approach the audit of your entity, along with details of the audit team members who will be working with you during this process. In addition, we will provide you with an audit questionnaire to complete prior to the audit commencing and an information checklist to assist you in preparing for your audit.

The type of engagement to be agreed to between Otago Fish and Game Council and BDO Invercargill is detailed in an engagement letter (dated 29 August 2025) between the parties. The engagement letter provides details of the respective responsibilities of us and the Council. This arrangements letter details the areas of focus for our audit and the logistics (timeline, personnel and fee) for the annual audit.

Audit Timeline

We propose the following timeline to complete the audit of your Council. Please advise us of any issues the intended timetable may present.

| Date | Responsibility | Milestone |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 29/08/2025 | BDO | Provide Audit information checklist and audit questionnaires |
| 08/09/2025 | OFG | Completion of audit questionnaires and return to BDO |
| 30/10/2025 | OFG | Copy of Trial Balance & supporting documentation provided to BDO |
| 30/10/2025 | OFG | Draft Accounts provided to BDO |
| 31/10/2025 | BDO | Commencement of audit |
| 03/11/2025 | BDO | Onsite Audit Visit in this week (Dates TBC) |
| 17/11/2025 | BDO | Details of changes to be made to Draft Accounts provided to accountant |
| 19/11/2025 | OFG | Final Draft Accounts received by BDO Invercargill for checking |
| 20/11/2025 | BDO | Accounts and Representation Letter provided to client for signing |
| 21/11/2025 | BDO / OFG | Signing of Financial Statements and Audit Opinion issued (at the latest) |
| 25/11/2025 | OFG | Board Pack to be issued pre-AGM |
| 02/12/2025 | OFG | AGM |

BDO New Zealand Ltd, a New Zealand limited company, is a member of BDO International Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, and forms part of the international BDO network of independent member firms. BDO New Zealand is a national association of independent member firms which operate as separate legal entities. For more info visit www.bdo.nz.

13.4 General Correspondence Out

13.4.1 Submission on the Fish and Game Governance and Organisational Improvements



29 August 2025

Hon James Meager
Minister of Hunting and Fishing
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Via Email: J.Meager@ministers.govt.nz

Submission on the Fish and Game Governance and Organisational Improvements

Dear Minister,

The Otago Fish & Game Council thanks you for the opportunity to provide input into the proposed reforms. We support the overall intention to strengthen Fish & Game's governance, ensure accountability, and improve consistency, but we have identified several areas where clarification and adjustment are needed to safeguard effective regional advocacy, financial sustainability, and licence holder confidence.

Our submission follows the headings and numbering in the ***Schedule of Legislative Amendments (Appendix One)*** and references the consultation questions provided to regions.

Functions

1. Nationwide policy consistency

- Question: Will the NZC be using its existing consultation policy for policy development or designing a new process for the development of binding and non binding policies?
Comment: Otago F&G supports development of a transparent consultation process, but this should build upon the current regional consultation framework. It is important that regional feedback is heard as it often highlights the practicalities and cost implications of new policy. This could be better defined in the legislation.
- Question: What are the consequences for non-compliance with nationally binding policies? The present Act doesn't have direction on management of policy non-compliance either.
Comment: We seek clarity on the enforcement mechanism, will this be Ministerial intervention, NZC audit powers, or other sanctions? Who will audit the NZC's compliance with policy?

2. Compliance

- Question: Minimum levels of compliance activity could lead to an increased cost. Are there any suggestions for how minimum levels of activity will be assessed? *Comment: Presently there is an aim to check 10% of adult licence holders nationally but that might be unachievable in some areas without popular and high use fisheries.*

3. Monitoring

- Question: How will the risk of over monitoring less popular or locally absent species be managed under any new policy prescribing minimum levels of monitoring?
- *Comment: The creation of minimum levels of monitoring could lead to increased costs and demand on resources. We wouldn't expect Otago to monitor pheasants and pukeko when they are very low in abundance and/or have low hunter interest. Setting binding policy for monitoring could lock in inefficient monitoring methods. This will need regular review.*

4. Corporate policies

- Question: Can examples be provided of expected efficiency gains through nationally binding corporate policies?
- Comment: Nationally binding corporate policies to date have had the effect of creating work and cost rather than reducing it and this could lead to reduced efficiency. Good example is recent remuneration policy.

5. Advocacy (also see appendix 1)

- Concern: Given Otago's Land and Water Plan is due shortly, how will the drafting of a national advocacy strategy interact with our need to act locally?
Comment: Otago F&G supports national coordination but seeks assurance that regions retain the ability to act urgently in local advocacy where needed.
- Question: What is the process and timeframe for NZC/Ministerial approval of court proceedings?
- Question: How will conflicts be resolved if NZC national advocacy overrides critical regional initiatives?

6. Sports Fish & Game Management Plans (SFGMPs)

- Question: The draft refers to conflicts with "other natural resources and needs of other users of habitat." What does this mean in practice? Can examples be provided?
- Question: Sportsfish and Game Management Plans have a regional focus but are statutory plans. How will conflicts between these statutory documents and NZC policy be managed? Which will take priority?
- Question; Should there be a reduction of the term of 10-year plans down to 5 years to enable increased flexibility to adapt to changing conditions and measurable goals? Alternative is to have statutory review clauses within the term.
- *Comment: Sportsfish & Game Management Plans should align to national direction but there is no mechanism to accomplish this. Perhaps there should be only one NZ wide 10 year plan?*

Functional Support

7. NZC Work Plan

- Clarification: No mention of NZC having to establish a strategic direction (which it has completed for 2023-2028) for the organisation. How will the legislation ensure alignment? And how will this be developed and aligned with regional priorities, particularly those set out in 10 year management plans?

8. Specialist NZC staff working across regions

- Concern: This model was ineffective in nearly every DoC restructuring. Could expert working groups made up regional staff coordinated by NZC be a better alternative?

9–10. Servicing, reporting, and templates

- Question: Can examples of reporting templates be provided now to allow regions to prepare?
- *Comment: There are already a number of templates for annual reporting available. It simply needs agreement on one format to be approved by NZC. Its one area where coordination could have been helpful.*

Issuing of Licences

11. Licence system

- Question: What efficiencies will be gained given the current system is already nationalised and automated?
- Question: Will agents contract directly with NZC? Who will manage liaison?
- *Comment: We believe that agents are part of the mid term future.*

Comment: The licencing system is largely centralised already and its only the distribution of funds by the service provider which would change. This would become a NZC function and is essentially only shifting a minor task between the parties. That wont save significant costs.

Allocation of Funding

12. Funding allocation model

- Question: Where and when will the model be defined? Secondary legislation or binding NZC policy?
- Question: Will a cap be considered on NZC's share of funding (e.g., 10%) to ensure resources remain in the regions?
- Question: Please clarify the difference between a "Financial Strategy" and a "Funding Allocation Model." And describe the interplay between them.
- Question: What appeals or safeguards exist if allocation changes lead to regional financial instability?

Comment: The allocation model needs to be fair and reasonable but it also need to encourage smaller councils to consider joining others when they fall beneath a threshold for financial sustainability.

Transparency and Reporting

13. Performance measures

- Question: How will consistency of OWPs with SFGMPs and NZC policy be audited? By NZC itself or external auditors?

14–16. Annual reports

- Question: Annual reports are now signed only by Chair and Manager before submission to NZC? Does this remove direct reporting to the Minister?
- Suggestion: A draft consolidated annual report should be circulated to regions before submission to ensure fair representation of regional content.
- Comment: The combined annual report is a large body of work over and above present reporting standards. This will come at a cost, especially staff time. A more efficient method would be to streamline regional reporting to something very basic and focus on a consolidated national report.

17. Information sharing

- Suggestion: Performance provisions should include clear timeframes (e.g., agendas published within X days; minutes circulated within 10 days in line with Local Govt Act).

18. Information to inform audits

- Question: Who audits NZC performance?

19. Reporting to DoC

- Question: Why is it necessary for Fish & Game to report legal proceedings to DoC, and how will this information be used?

Comment: This will require extra work and therefore additional cost to the organisation. A good case for this provision has not been provided.

Modernising Fish & Game

20. Communications

- Suggestion: Develop clear protocols for email and digital communication to licence holders.
- *Comment: There have been instances in the past where NZC has published content on regional matters without the region's approval.*

21–22. Online meetings and role clarity

Generally support clarity around Regulation setting processes and online meetings.

23. Review Function

Comment: Otago Council welcomes the introduction of a separate Ministry for Hunting and Fishing and has an expectation that the Minister will be an active and positive advocate for the organisation.

Governance and Elections

26. Voting eligibility

- Question: Will voting be electronic only? If postal options are retained, who funds the cost of sending papers to all eligible licence holders?
- *Comment: Moving to full licence holder participation in elections could be very costly in terms of postage if it is all to be mailed out. At present this is affordable as the electoral role is a subset of the full database.*

28. No subregions

- Question: Might this be discouraging to amalgamations of smaller regions if they feel they will lose representation?

Suggestion: Not more than two subregions per region. That would allow for separate areas to be represented. In Otago's case a central Otago and coastal Otago wards.

30–32. Election procedures

Question: Can the organisation move past mailing out voting forms?

Comment: There is significant (and increasing) cost in mailing out voting papers and paying for postal voting. The organisation should move forward to an electronic system.

33. NZC membership

Comment: This is a big workload for a regional chair, especially as an unpaid role. It could discriminate against a working or younger person in the role.

Suggestion: Regional chairs may attend NZC meetings remain in public excluded items where they have an interest in the item.

34 – 45 F&GC membership

General support for the provisions.

40. Co-opting

Comment: No mention of co-opting non -voting member(s) who have specialist skills onto Regional Councils. Payment of these members who are co-opted onto Councils may need to be considered.

Needs of Other Interests

51–54. Treaty partners, natural resources, and compliance

- Question: The Minister’s new power to prohibit fish transfers is unclear. Will this apply even where the fish already exist and to those areas prescribed in SFGMPs?
- *Comment: Otago has a number of liberation sites, some particularly dedicated to youth angling and the training of novice anglers.*
- Question: The legislation introduces the need to have regard to the interests of others. Examples have related to aviation and other businesses. This is potentially a very broad statement and it would be useful to specify those areas that require consideration. What does the requirement to balance with “other natural resources and needs of other users” mean in practice?

Other Matters

59. Court fines

- Question: Will redirection of fines include infringement fees, not just prosecutions? If not, can the region be given the option to use diversion as part of its option list for dealing with offenders?

Transition

- Question: The reforms note that F&G will be “supported by DoC.” In what way? financially, staffing, or advisory?
- Question: Council is aware of the timeframes for primary legislation and its passage through the House. What is the expected timeframe for the secondary legislation to be promulgated?
- *Comment: The Otago Fish and Game Council would be reassured to learn that the proposed new legislation had been discussed with the Parliamentary Opposition to ensure that the legislation and associated regulations would continue with a change in government.*

Hatcheries

Sports fish hatcheries have not been covered elsewhere in the schedule of legislative amendments.

Otago operates a sports fish hatchery (51E of the Conservation Act) but is aware there is no regulations in place for sports fish hatcheries. This may require an additional passage in the functions in the new Act.

Costs

Presentations by reform staff have reiterated that the costs to implement changes will be funded from efficiencies gained elsewhere. As a lean organisation, we are unsure as to where these funds might come from. There are additional costs faced for:

- Consolidated annual reporting. Presently 13 councils report individually. A consolidated annual report would be in addition to this rather than an alternative to current reporting.
- Development of financial policy and resource allocation system (likely a consultant will be required)
- Development of new policy for advocacy and minimum standards for species management and compliance may also require a consultants to establish these standards.
- Development of new business systems. Corporate policies and personnel policies will also require external input or contractors
- NZC staffing to increase, due to establishing a 'shared resource' will take resources away from regions. From experience, Wellington is the most difficult and expensive area for recruitment into roles such as these.
- Some regions, presently sitting beneath the level of adequate funding for key activities will require to be topped up.
- Full database mailout (as opposed to only those who elect to be on the electoral roll) for elections, including voting returns via mail, will increase the cost of elections significantly.
- Additional reporting on enforcement beyond infringements will add to central reporting requirement.

Conclusion

Otago Fish & Game supports reforms that enhance accountability and coordination but stresses the importance of maintaining strong regional advocacy, financial certainty, and transparent consultation. We look forward to continued engagement as these reforms progress.

Yours sincerely



Adrian McIntyre, Chair
Otago Fish & Game Council

Appendix 1

Fish and Game's advocacy is valued by licence holders

Fish & Game's advocacy delivers exceptional value to licence holders. Through comprehensive representation across the full spectrum of issues that affect their interests, our advocacy function empowers licence holders to participate meaningfully in decisions affecting their food, sport, passion and livelihoods.

Our advocacy function ensures licence holders' voices are heard when:

- Ensuring licence holder interests are represented in regional planning processes, including in resource consents that affect them.
- Protecting and maintaining public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation activities, including unformed legal roads and Queen's Chain access.
- Protecting traditional hunting and fishing areas from incompatible recreational developments.
- Protecting and restoring wetlands.
- Advocating for habitat enhancement and restoration projects.
- Protecting spawning habitat and minimising disruptive works during critical breeding periods.
- Supporting the provision of fish passage for sports fish and indigenous fish species.
- Ensuring healthy freshwater with adequate flows, good water quality standards and abundant fish populations.
- Securing Water Conservation Orders for outstanding rivers and lakes.
- Supporting sustainable catchment management and protecting against inappropriate land use intensification near sensitive waterways.
- Managing species interactions between introduced sports fish and native species to minimise negative impacts on indigenous fish populations.
- Minimising and preventing botulism outbreaks in waterfowl.
- Advocating for climate change adaptation measures and flood protections that preserve life, infrastructure and waterway health.

Due to the extreme cost and complexity of participating in resource management decision making across New Zealand, without our advocacy function operating effectively, hunters and anglers' values will be represented significantly less in these spaces, or more likely not at all.

Our advocacy follows licence holder aspirations. A national survey of licence holders in 2023¹ found that 83% of respondents thought it was very important or important that Fish & Game establish Water Conservation Orders that provide legal protection for water bodies. Through regular elections, licence holders set the governance agenda, consistently voting for Councillors who pursue their aspirations for a healthy environment.

The current environmental pressures demonstrate why responsive regional advocacy remains essential. In Otago alone, 64% of State of Environment sites do not meet national bottom lines,³ nutrient loads may need cuts of 50-70% in key catchments,⁴ and 70% of main estuaries suffer high eutrophication⁵. These pressures reduce the productivity and resilience of fish and game stocks, making hunting and angling less fruitful and enjoyable.

Otago Fish & Game's advocacy is relationship-first

In undertaking licence holder advocacy, Otago Fish & Game takes a relationship-first approach, advocating through relationship building and handshake agreements before all else. This approach has produced results – with our stakeholders overwhelmingly providing positive feedback about our engagement. A 2023 survey of Otago stakeholders² found that half of 32 organisations (farming groups, resource users, eNGOs, government departments, local government bodies and academic institutions) thought Fish & Game was doing a good job engaging with them and close to a further third of respondents said we did a very good job.

The ability to participate in court action remains critical as a last resort that enables this relationship-first approach. Our experience shows that handshake agreements can only be made when parties are on an equal footing, with courts providing independent arbitration when negotiations fail.

Fish & Game's advocacy is most responsive to licence holders needs when driven by regions

The operational management of advocacy and court proceedings – including court case initiation and implementation is most helpful to licence holders when driven by the regions.

Where a Fish & Game Council has the staff and expertise to undertake advocacy and court proceedings, this work should be led locally.

In our experience, the effectiveness of bringing in staff from out of the region to undertake advocacy and cases is significantly reduced compared to that of staff with these skills within the affected region. This is because regional issues require expertise and understanding of local circumstances that is not always clear to people from outside the region.

This is also the case for making decision as whether to launch advocacy or court actions. Adding layers of bureaucracy onto these decisions via requiring authorisation from the New Zealand Fish & Game Council or Minister means that these decisions become uncertain. This will have a chilling effect for local staff when responding to local licence holder needs, as they are less likely to know whether a course of action would be supported and it will take much longer to find out due to added layers of bureaucracy.

We already work collaboratively with the New Zealand Fish & Game Council on funding major court cases due to their significant cost, and all court cases that we are aware of in recent years have been launched with New Zealand Council support.

We support a national direction with respect to advocacy, if it is written inclusively. There are many areas where Fish & Game Councils around the country are aligned, such as ensuring public access to water bodies or protecting and restoring habitat to provide for productive and resilient populations for anglers and hunters. National advocacy policy, written and supported by Fish & Game Councils around the country, would be helpful to better coordinate this advocacy work.

Summary

1. Advocacy is valued by licence holders, particularly on access and habitat protection.
2. Even with a relationship-first advocacy approach, the ability to launch court action is critical to effectively representing licence holders.
3. Advocacy is most responsive to licence holder needs when driven by regions.
4. Broad national direction on advocacy would be helpful, where it is written and supported by Fish & Game Councils around the country.

Citations

1. New Zealand Fish & Game Council *Licence holder research 2023: Licence holder perceptions and attitudes towards Fish & Game New Zealand* (New Zealand Fish & Game Council, July 2023)
2. Otago Fish & Game Council *Stakeholder Study* (Otago Fish & Game Council, April 2023)
3. Rachel Ozanne, Amir Levy and Hugo Borges *State and Trends of Rivers, Lakes, and Groundwater in Otago 2017 – 2022* (Otago Regional Council, May 2023) Otago Regional Council <www.orc.govt.nz/media/14523/orc-river-lake-groundwater-state-and-trends-2017-2022.pdf>
4. Ton Snelder and Caroline Fraser *Assessment of Nutrient Load Reductions to Achieve Target Attribute States in the Rivers, Lakes and Estuaries of Otago Using revised periphyton nutrient criteria* (LWP Ltd, December 2023) Otago Regional Council <www.orc.govt.nz/media/d1rlomxk/report_assessment-of-nutrient-load-reductions-to-achieve-target-attribute-states-in-the-rivers-lakes-and-estuaries-of-otago_lwp_21dec2023.pdf>
5. David Plew *Proposed nutrient load limits for Otago estuaries* (NIWA, August 2021) Otago Regional Council <www.orc.govt.nz/media/15535/nutrient-loading_otago-estuaries.pdf>

14.0 Items to be Received or Noted – Papers listed separately

14.1 Clutha Mata-Au Sportsfish & Habitat Trust Annual Report

14.2 Upper Clutha Salmon Spawning

14.3 Investigating Migration of Brown Trout in Waters of the Leith

14.4 Acoustic Salmonid Monitoring of the Southern Lakes

14.5 Whole Season Game Bird Harvest and Activity 2025

14.6 Game Bird Additional Survey Questions

14.7 Otago Pukeko Monitoring 2025

14.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory for 2023/24

14.9 Compliance Summary

14.10 Otago Fish and Game Climate Adaption

14.11 Designated Waters Fishery and Controlled Fishery

14.12 Communications Plan Annual Report 2025

15.0 General Business