

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL,
HELD ON TUESDAY 19 AUGUST 2014 AT 3.00PM AT HOTEL COACHMAN,
140 FITZHERBET AVENUE, PALMERSTON NORTH

1. **Present:**

Chairman Martin Taylor, Councillors Eric Neumann, Jim Cook, Simon Muckley, Andy Tannock, Andrew Morris, Strato Cotsilinis

2. **In Attendance:**

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Steve Pilkington, Hamish Carnachan

Licenceholders: Reg Cull, Mark Royds, Jason Woods, Don Rood

3. **Apologies:**

Councillors Richard Moore, Mark Grace, Chris O'Meara, Brad Johnson ,
Strato Cotsilinis (for lateness)

Staff: Sue Wray, Corina Jordan

It was then moved that:

the apologies be accepted.

Jim Cook/Andrew Morris

Carried

4. **Public Participation**

Reg Cull acknowledged that continuing the exemption for use of lead in sub-12gauge shotguns was a good result and reiterated the need for this position. He also considered that the lead shot ingestion research programme proposed should be considered in conjunction with investigations into sub-lethal effects of using steel shot. He also noted from 56 years of hunting experience that he had seen some shot in swan gizzards, but he had never seen lead shot in mallard gizzards. Mr Cull noted that he had seen a decline in numbers of mallard (in the order of 40%) from 2000 based on a small systematic count he conducts prior to the start of the season in Foxton. He postulated that this decline coincided with the significant change of using steel shot.

Mr Cull also commented on the recent Horizons Research opinion poll commissioned by Fish & Game and considered that those who asked the question didn't fully appreciate the full story. Mr Cull's opinion was that it was counter-productive of NZ F&G Council to continue to label landholders as 'environmental vandals', and focus should be on 'core business'. He further suggested that Fish & Game could become more involved in the

Balance Farm Environmental Award to help increase understanding between farmers and hunters/anglers, which would help to avoid potential access denial issues being threatened.

5. Conflicts of Interest

A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of Interest. Councillor Jim Cook declared a potential conflicts of interest in that he had a non-commercial interest in the new pheasant block at Waituna which was subject of an application for upland game site with special conditions.

6. Minutes of Previous Meeting of 10 June 2014:

After a brief discussion it was moved that:

the Minutes of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 10 June 2014 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Jim Cook/Andrew Morris

Carried

7. Matters Arising

Mr Teal confirmed that following the licence fee confirmation, the position of Environmental Manager (based out of Wellington region) had been confirmed and after a robust selection process, a contract for this position was being finalised.

Mr Teal confirmed that Fish & Game had sought LINZ to review their contract decision for leasing an area of accreted land off Bluff Road, Woodville but no further advice on the process had been forthcoming.

The Chairman would request an update on progress regarding a scoping paper to review the financial procedures within Fish & Game that Mathew Hall (Central South Island's NZ F&GC Appointee) had drafted, and any progress from any NZF&GC's committees tasked with considering these issues.

Other items on the task list that were refined:

- Develop a work programme that would define tasks and milestones to have two operational maimais available for the start of the 2015 season (by December 2014)
- Lake Wairarapa Management Committee to meet, and start communicating with permitted hunters regarding maimai structures and define a timeframe for this to progress (plan developed by December 2014).

Councillor Tannock confirmed that information on amount of sub-12gauge ammunition had been provided to Robert Sowman, Policy and Planning Manager NZ F&G Council

8. **NZ Council Business**

Councillor Morris confirmed that Lyndsay Lyons was the new NZF&G Chairman for the three day meeting 18 ó 20 July 2014. He also confirmed that Otago F&GC had replaced their longstanding appointee with what they considered to be a temporary replacement ó but a legal opinion obtained in 2000 indicated that a replaced appointee may technically not be able to return during the same electoral term.

Councillor Morris informed that there had been a discussion on licence sales ó and potential reasons for any increases or decreases had been provided by regional managers.

Councillor Morris gave a brief account of the attendance by the Minister of Conservation Nick Smith:

- o The Minister stated that all licence fee increases would only be granted in pace with (or less than) CPI inflation.
- o Some comments made by the Minister including criticisms were not new but questioned whether they were appropriate given this was the only meeting with the Minister during his current tenure;
- o

Sir Geoffrey Palmer attended the Council meeting and gave an overview of NZ Council's function especially its co-ordinating function that may involve auditing regions. Chairman Taylor questioned whether these regional audits would be punitive audits or rolling audits. He noted that while there is value of audits to getting an organisation all on one page but a Gap Analysis and process would be required to progress. Councillor Morris noted that decision of audit process would be discussed at the proposed November Governors meeting on 22 November 2014. Discussion ensued on the purpose of the audits, including attempts to remove parochialism as an issue in decision making. It was considered that it was important to define a viable audit tool with a consistency of approach signed off by governors. Councillor Neumann considered that the terms of reference of audits were important in defining the focus - whether it be performance compared with expected performance or strategic planning focus. Chairman Taylor considered that certain processes were required to get valid outcomes such as determining whether councils are meeting statutory purpose. Councillor Morris noted that a sub-committee (Mathew Hall, Robert Sowman, Paul Didier-Dixon, Bryce Johnson) had been formed to define papers for discussion.

Councillor Cotsilinis arrived at 3.30pm

Councillor Morris confirmed that three items had been tentatively proposed for the November Governors meeting:

- NZ Council's co-ordinating function;
- Mallard decline in the North Island;
- Centralising functions such as F&G's finances and reserves.

Councillor Morris noted that the proposed changes to the fishing licence categories had been delayed but it was NZ Council's directive that the Non-resident licence to be introduced for this season.

Jason Wood and Don Rood (licenceholders) arrived at 3.40pm.

Councillor Morris noted that NZ Council had sought to commission research on current lead ingestion rates. Discussion ensued on what the information would mean in terms of management decision – for example if results indicate a lesser or similar rate of ingestion than 2000/2001.

Councillor Morris discussed NZ Council's Gifts and Bequests Policy and opportunities to seek external funding such as: Trust House in Wairarapa, and formalising efforts for works on the Mangatainoka for businesses.

Councillor Morris also noted that following a presentation by North Canterbury F&GC Manager the application for \$30K for Fish in Schools project had been reinstated by NZ Council in the budget confirmations.

It was then moved

That the report presented by Councillor Morris relating to the NZ Fish & Game Council meeting on 18–20 July 2014 be received

Simon Muckley/Andy Tannock

Carried

9. Pencarrow Lakes Access Submission Update

Chairman Taylor gave an overview of recent events regarding attempts to assert public access rights to Pencarrow Lakes. He briefly noted:

- A legal opinion on the legislative interpretation of the Settlement Act for the sites was obtained;
- An advisor from Minister's Office (OTS) had met with Tenth's Trust representatives. He advised that it would be helpful to continue dialogue between Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust/Tenth's Trust and Fish & Game but Tenth's Trust advised difficulty in organising a meeting in the short term.

Chairman Taylor outlined two possible courses of action:

- Push for public awareness (initially linked to consideration of draft co-management plan);

- Take issue to Parliamentary Regulations Review ó which would necessitate approximately \$3,000 in legal costs.

Discussion ensued on merits of taking the issue into the media focused on asking the Government to step in based on the principle of a party not Treaty settlement obligations. It was concluded that Wellington F&GC would need to seek NZ F&GC's assistance if it was decided to run media messaging.

Councillor Neumann noted that the aquatic weed issue clouded the interpretation for all parties ó is there enough research for the 'significant environmental effect' clause in the legislation to be proven and therefore justify an action? It was agreed that advice would be sought from regional councils on what constituted a 'significant environmental effect' and what decision process they took to make such an assessment.

Councillor Muckley noted that the NIWA report had concluded the ecological values of the lake had not lessened, the threat was not proven, and duck hunters probably were not the cause for current incursions. He concluded that this does not prove a further 'significant risk' from presence of duck hunters especially when they were diligently undertaking weed control protocols. Councillor Muckley then further described the permitting and precautionary processes that hunters have followed over the last seven years to hunt on the lakes:

- DoC permit to carry firearm and enter 'reserve' which also acted as permission from GWRC and PNBST;
- Gear sprayed and checked with Check/Clean/Dry protocols used;
- Key from Hutt City Council to enter the area through gate.

There was concern expressed that this could have significant precedent value for other sites ó where despite all precautions being taken, waterfowl hunters were being singled out for access restrictions. This could also be a case where the iwi and local government agency undermine the intent of the treaty settlement legislation.

Discussion on two possible options actions ensued regarding media engagement and possible presentation to the Regulations Review Committee. Councillor Neumann suggested that Fish & Game should develop a scope of other potential recreational users/ partners that may be affected by similar potential access restrictions and inform them of these issues, even if direct implications to other users was limited in this case.

It was then moved that

Wellington Fish & Game Council increase public awareness of the access issue to Pencarrow lakes by engaging the media and requesting assistance from NZ F&GC staff due to its potential precedent value; and take the issue to the Parliamentary Regulations Review Committee

which would necessitate expenditure of up to \$3,000 in legal costs in preparation of papers

Andrew Morris/Eric Neumann

Carried

10. Annual Plan 2014/15

Mr Teal noted that there had been some updates to the Annual Plan following confirmation of the licence fee recommendation and contestable funding applications confirmed.

After brief discussion it was moved that

The draft Annual Plan for 2014/15 for Wellington Fish & Game Council be adopted

Jim Cook/Eric Neumann

Carried

11. Public Participation (continued)

Jason Wood (licenceholder) addressed Council on a number of issues that local hunters had discussed:

- Unpinned semi-auto shotguns ó with a suggested option of pinning to three shots except for Canada Geese.
- Shoveler duck appeared from anecdotal counts to be fewer particularly in the Horowhenua area
- Discussion on the effectiveness of limits on bags/season length as part of the regulatory mix
- The pros and cons of making it mandatory to use of a dog for retrieving harvested waterfowl

Councillor Tannock noted that from the results from an email survey conducted in 2013, limiting semi-auto shotguns to three shots was a less favoured restriction for reducing harvest than smaller bag limits or shorter season. He considered that education and peer driven approach may be effective in changing hunter behavior when using more than three shots. Councillor Cotsilinis noted that other regions such as Waikato had regulation to pin semi-auto shotguns to three shots and other regions were considering this option.

Councillor Tannock also noted that shoveler duck are -managedø as a national population and that while there may have been fewer birds seen in areas of the Manawatu, in contrast that there appeared to be good numbers of birds at lakes Wairarapa and Ellesmere.

Councillor Cotsilinis noted that Auckland/Waikato region had banned feeding out of ponds for extended periods. Discussion ensued on the effect of

transitional food sources and how large feeding out actions may have some effect, even if on a local level.

Reg Cull left the meeting at 4.15pm

12. **Sports Fish & Game Management Plan Review**

Mr Teal discussed a possible timetable for Council to consider a draft Management Plan (aiming for December 2014), consultation process required, and potential recommendation to the Minister of Conservation.

Mr Teal was directed to use a template from other regional Sports Fish & Game Management Plans for the basis of the initial draft.

13. **Occupational Safety and Health Review**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the draft Health and Safety Policy that had been developed internally between Fish & Game regions, and the Ministry of Business, Innovation, & Employment/Institute of Directors NZ guidance on good governance practices relating to managing health and safety risks. Chairman Taylor noted that governors needed to demonstrate an understanding of the issues and take an interest in managing risks. After discussion the Chairman undertook to sign the governors' commitment document to support a positive attitude to health and safety issues.

It was then moved that

The draft Fish & Game Health and Safety Policy be adopted for Wellington Fish & Game Council

Andy Tannock/Jim Cook

Carried

14. **Consideration of Application for Upland Game Property with Special Conditions – Waituna, Feilding**

Discussion ensued on the potential conflict of interest of Councillor Cook that was declared at the onset of the meeting ó it was understood that it was a non-commercial conflict but he had been consulted on the location of the hunting area. It was agreed that Councillor Cook would not be present during discussions relating to the application, and left the room at 4.30pm.

Mr Teal outlined that application for special conditions for an upland game property had been received from Mr Peter Gifford for a site at Waituna. This met the timeframes for game regulations to be considered for the 2015 game season

Various issues were discussed to provide guidance on potential conditions to be considered by staff relating to the application:

1. What is the benefit to the public?

- Creating additional public resource
- What access would be available to public for hunting? Noting it is currently not open to general public hunting.
- What are the operators/syndicates views on junior hunts
- Benefits to the community ó dog handlers etc have been involved in other organised hunts

2. Operational Issues

- Are there neighbour issues to be aware of?
- Feral and predator control
- What do with bird carcass ó store, sell, use
- Health monitoring on population ó of concentrated bird numbers (guidelines) with emerging disease work ó introduction of spread of disease modelling awareness (seek Massey University advice)

It was then moved that

The application for Waituna site be accepted by Council for further consideration and that staff would present a report to Council following a site visit and provide advice on a potential (draft) agreement.

Eric Neumann/Andy Tannock

Carried

Councillor Cook returned to the meeting at 4.55pm

15. **Junior Participation Update**

Mr Teal noted that the fish tanks to be used in the *Fish In Schools* programme had been ordered and would be available for use in October.

16. **Lake Wairarapa Update**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the progress on the fish removal project at Bartons Lagoon where GWRC staff and consultant had undertaken their third removal event ó and as expected numbers were lower in winter.

Councillor Tannock noted that there were Game Bird Habitat Trust monies set aside for works on the JK Donald wetland and that Fish & Game needed to take a proactive approach to utilise these funds and maintain contemporary credibility with other organisations doing work on the lake. It was agreed that a brief for obtaining quotes for weir designs (including a collapsible weir design, and fish pass) would be given priority. With some of the plans already developed for works on the site, it was agreed that increased priority would also be given to developing Management Plans that provide a vision and some structure to actions/works.

17. **Mallard Research Project Update**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the progress on the mallard project with some sixty birds having radio-transmitters surgically inserted into hens in

Auckland/Waikato and Southland regions respectively. Initial results provided an indication of number of non-breeding birds, and also a higher than expected number of fatalities in hens and offspring due to a range of predators.

18. Management Report 1 June – 31 July 2014

Mr Teal confirmed that the Wairarapa Water Use Project had narrowed down their preferred site selection to five sites, although two had been shown to have geophysical uncertainties ó the Mangaterere site remains as a potential site. The Stakeholders Advisory Group discussed the implications of the final decision of the Board of Inquiry regarding the Ruataniwha irrigation project in terms of relevance for other irrigation projects.

Councillor Cotsilinis confirmed that the proposed childrenø fish-out day site, east of Otaihanga (Kapiti Coast), had been previously stocked with rainbow trout about a decade ago, and was worth pursuing with.

After discussion it was moved that

The management report for 1 June – 31 July 2014 be received.

Strato Cotsilinis/Andrew Morris

Carried

19. Fishing Licence Report and Game Licence Report

Following a query from an licence agent to Councillor Morris, discussion ensued on the extent to which licence sales are made for each individual licence agent which are made public in the agenda. It was agreed that the current reporting format was appropriate.

After brief discussion it was moved that

The Fish Licence Sales and Game Licence Sales reports as at 8 August 2014 be received.

Jim Cook/Strato Cotsilinis

Carried

20. Expenditure Report

Councillor Cotsilinis noted that expenditure was tracking less than budget, and that licenece income appeared to be above budget.

It was confirmed that \$3000 for legal advice for hunter access was approved as expenditure by Council

was tracking less than After discussion it was moved that

the Expenditure Report for 30 June 2014 and Financial Transactions for May and June 2014 be approved

Strato Cotsilinis/ Eric Neumann

Carried

21. Correspondence

Councillor Cotsinilis noted that the article (dated 17 June) on the release of trout into the Capital Trout Centre site (page 255 of agenda) for children's fish-out days had garnered positive feedback.

Brief discussion ensued on correspondence and media after which it was then moved that

Correspondence and Media reports for June – July be received

Andrew Morris/Andy Tannock

Carried

22. General Business

Councillor Tannock gave a brief overview of the Game Bird Habitat Trust grants recently decided on by the Board: The Wairio Block (margins of Lake Wairarapa) received \$15,000 to complete the bund which was currently about one third in extent. The issues of water management and reticulation around the nearby wetland complex including Matthew Lagoon and Boggy pond was also outlined. The Trust Board stipulated that the site be maintained and promoted as access for waterfowl hunters.

There was a request for a key for entry into Kilmore Lodge be made available in the Wairarapa given the Fish & Game Officer is now based in the area.

Mr Steve Pilkington gave a brief overview of the ranger training day intended to give some team building activities and upskill honorary rangers on legal processes undertaken in prosecutions.

Mr Pilkington also gave a brief overview of the current low water state of Centennial Lagoon in Palmerston North that was still leaking water following the earthquake in January 2014. It has cast doubt on using the site for the proposed Fish Out day in November with the Duddings Lake being the next preferred site.

Mr Teal noted that there were up to four wetland enhancement projects that were unlikely to be successful in the Game Bird Habitat Trust grant application.. It was agreed to offer a subsidy grant from within the budget for wetland enhancement budget to these projects.

Councillor Cotsinilis noted that a potential contact worth following up for the Fish in Schools programme for intermediate aged students was Mike Gillett from Lower Hutt Intermediate School.

Councillor Tannock noted that the ðSwamp Compö promotion to encourage trapping of predators had received \$18K donated by industry. He considered the promotion of predator control and trapping was particularly relevant given the preliminary results of the mallard research that tracked nesting hens.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 5.30pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Cosmopolitan Club, Masterton, Tuesday 14 October 2014 at 3.00pm.

Chairman_____ Date_____