

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER 2015 AT 3.00PM AT UPPER HUTT COSSIE CLUB, 11 LOGAN STREET, UPPER HUTT

1. **Present:**
Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Eric Neumann, Jim Cook, Andy Tannock, Andrew Morris, Brad Johnson

2. **In Attendance:**
Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Steve Pilkington, Hamish Carnachan

Licenceholders: Rob Hazelwood, Mark Flaws, Paul Shortis, Malcolm Francis, Dan Waechter

3. **Apologies:**
Councillors Richard Moore, Mark Grace, Chris O'Meara, Simon Muckley, Corina Jordan, Don Scott

It was then moved that:
the apologies be accepted.

Jim Cook/Andrew Morris
Carried

4. **Public Participation**
Chairman Strato Cotsilinis welcomed members of the public and provided them to an opportunity to speak to Council ó no issues were brought to the attention of Council.

5. **Conflicts of Interest**
A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of Interest. No new Conflicts of Interest were noted.

6. **Minutes of Previous Meeting of 18 August 2015:**
After a brief discussion it was moved that:
the Minutes of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 18 August 2015 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Andrew Morris /Jim Cook
Carried

After a brief discussion it was moved that:

the in-Committee Minutes of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 18 August 2015 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Andy Tannock/Andrew Morris

Carried

7. **Matters Arising**

Mr Teal confirmed that the following actions had been completed from the Accumulated Action List from 18 August 2015 meeting:

- A memorandum of understanding had been confirmed with Kaitoke Gardens and Café to progress the concept of a children's fishing area;
- A letter had been sent to NZ F&G Council indicating preference to retain within region any additional licence fee income generated for Non-resident Licence sales;
- A letter had been sent to Southland F&GC indicating that Wellington F&GC had no objection to the concept of allowing tenkara style fishing;
- Staff had looked at possible implications for fencing requirements in the Proposed GWRC Regional Plan with specific implications at Kourarau Dam for anglers and landowner;
- A letter was sent to GWRC indicating concerns about the Stakeholders Advisory Group process for the Wairarapa Irrigation Project;
- Options for acknowledging volunteer effort were still being investigated for costing.

8. **NZ Council Business – Report on Meeting 25 and 26 September 2015**

Councillor Morris confirmed that NZF&GC had concluded that the treatment of additional licence income from Non-Resident Licence sales be retained in the region it was generated. It was acknowledged that regions such as West Coast could be disadvantaged due to the location of region where licence monies are generated and where non-resident anglers actually fish for trout in backcountry areas. Councillor Neumann noted that restrictions on the ring-fenced income would still be targeted for back country fisheries.

Councillor Morris noted that North Canterbury F&GC had nominated a new appointee to NZF&GC ó Serge Bonnafoux.

Councillor Morris noted that Northland F&GC had purchased land that has resulted in a dedicated reserve in perpetuity with Fish and Game and hunter access .

Councillor Morris noted that Andy Garrick (Eastern F&G Manager) had met with DOC (Hamilton Hub) about irregularities with permits for releasing mallards ó with discussing on whether it could be a function for Fish & Game to manage.

Councillor Morris noted that NZF&GC had discussed the concerns on the affordability of RM/legal funding. Part of the discussion focused on looking public awareness campaigns as a tool to keep outcomes affordable.

Councillor Morris noted that NZF&GC had discussed concerns about the need to protect legal precedents that had already been achieved through litigation and ensure passed decisions are not diluted or overturned. Implementation expectations by Fish & Game NZ need to be documented and the implementing agency made aware they will be watched and assessed on that performance.

Councillor Morris noted that NZF&GC would discuss the mallard research at the November meeting in Hamilton. There was also an acknowledgement that there was a need to review the implementation of the research strategy to better focus research on our research needs and information gaps.

Councillor Morris noted that consideration of standard operating procedures (SOP) for setting hunting and fishing regulations to standardise and make regulations less complicated to licenceholders.

Councillor Morris noted that NZF&GC met with representatives of the Professional Fishing Guides Association regarding a memorandum of understanding regarding a Guides Licence to ensure consistent messaging to the Minister of Conservation would result. Issues such as NZ residency to be eligible for a Guides Licence and requirement to have a work safety plan were discussed. There were concerns regarding foreign fishing guides taking bookings overseas, flying in direct, and not being subject to specific requirements such as safety plans. Councillor Neumann noted a concern that he considered that it was not Fish & Game's core business to be ensuring OSH planning for third parties.

Councillor Morris noted that NZF&GC were to review the election regulations as there were no powers to enforce current provisions or irregularities.

Councillor Morris noted that NZF&GC had undertaken a review of governance policies.

Councillor Morris explained that Mr Teal and Corina Jordan had presented an Environmental Co-ordination Report providing an overview of issues relating to scope and breadth of work, workload expectations, and upskilling regional staff.

Councillor Morris noted that NZFGC had conducted an RM workshop that considered funding and other tools such as public awareness campaigns. Discussion by Wellington Councillors focused on alternative income streams

for these issues. Councillor Neumann sought clarification on Fish & Game's stance on the Ruataniwha decisions and Hawke's Bay Regional Council's stance to "still push forward". Chairman Cotsilinis and Mr Teal provided an overview of the recent experiences of the One Plan Regional Plan regarding implementation by the Horizons Regional Council. Councillor Morris confirmed that issues such as these and Water Conservation Orders that NZF&GC needed to ensure that provisions need to be implemented as intended by appropriate agencies.

It was then moved

that the report presented by Councillor Morris relating to the NZ Fish & Game Council meeting on 25 and 26 September 2015 be received

Andy Tannock/Brad Johnson

Carried

9. Meeting Timetable for 2016

Discussion ensued on a potential timetable for Wellington F&GC meetings noting that it was set to be integrated into other internal processes and meeting schedules. It was confirmed that confirmation of the game season conditions in early February would be undertaken by email and telephone conference if required. It was confirmed that the meeting day would remain Tuesday and maintain a roster of three locations around the region as it had for the previous three years and the provisional meeting dates would be:

16 February 2016	Upper Hutt
5 April 2016	Masterton
7 June 2016	Palmerston North
16 August 2016	Upper Hutt
11 October 2016	Palmerston North
6 December 2016 (&AGM)	Masterton

10. Project Reports

Chairman Cotsilinis noted that each project report would be presented and questions of clarification arising from each report would be considered and all reports received *in toto*.

- **Project 1111 – Sports Fish Population Monitoring**
- **Project 1111A – Trout Spawning Survey Report**
- **Project 1112 – Rangitikei Trout Fishery Management**
- **Project 1113 – River Control Fishery Assessment**

Councillor Neumann noted that the Walking Access Commission may be up for review and requested that Fish & Game be proactive in this review in linking partnerships with other interest groups to effectively advocate to keep resources for access available (eg mapping system).

Staff were requested to find out when the formal review of the Walking Access Commission would commence.

- **Project 1114 Game Bird Population Assessments**
- **Project 1114A – Banding Report** Request that a summarised paper be available to hunters
- **Project 1121 – National Hunter Harvest Survey**
- **Project 1124 – Regional Hunter Survey**
- **Project 1181 – Game Bird Dispersal** - Noted that reduction in paradise shelduck disturbance requests had declined in line with anecdotal and trend count numbers
- **Project 1121 – Resource Management Advocacy**
- **Project 1121A – RM - Environmental Manager’s Activities**
- **Project 1313 – Hunter Access Permits Summary**
- **Projects - Communications**
 - **Project 1331 Newsletter/Magazine**
 - **Project 1341 Communications to Clients**
 - **Project 1342 Lapsed Participant Newsletter**
 - **Project 1441 Public Awareness**
 - **Project 1443 Promotions**

Councillor Morris noted that successful open emails of weekly reports had gone from 18% open emails (which is a success) but had been running at 25%. Clarification to be sought on what an open email constituted.

- **Project 1351 – Hunter Training, Lake Omanu**
- **Project 1354 Junior Angler Programme**

Council discussed the success and logistics of the current year’s Fish in Schools programme, and risks including given variable teacher involvement.

It was moved that:

Consideration be given to obtaining a further five units (in addition to the current five units) for 2016 if appropriate personnel are involved (teachers or volunteers to oversee), only if funding is confirmed, and investigating a funded person to provide resourcing on a limited basis per month to service schools.

Eric Neumann/Andrew Morris

Carried

Councillor Neumann suggested that a five year strategic programme be developed to indicate how Wellington F&G wished to proceed with this project, including scoping resourcing any increase in extent. Discussion ensued on how to progress this in conjunction with a long term mentoring programme. Chairman Cottilinis noted the previous success in a Lower

Hutt Intermediate School in a six week course had rapid growth in interest. Councillor Neumann noted that increases in the Fish in Schools (eg. two units per year) that a critical mass will arrive where additional staff resources may be required from a budget standpoint. Councillor Johnson noted that growth of the programme could be advanced at a steady rate or partnership with others. Dan Waechter noted that training at one location was worth considering, also given opportunities for public funding for community education. Malcolm Francis considered that an overview document be refined that could be sent to Fish & Game clubs as there were resources in clubs and a likelihood of support of these initiatives. It was agreed that staff would develop a paper to outline a staged extension of the programme that could be used for eliciting interest from clubs and used in proposals for funding. Messrs Pilkington and Carnachan both emphasised the need for Fish in Schools to be written into school curriculum and that Southland F&GC were investigating an alternatively funded approach from a provider ó where it had not yet been an outcome from the North Canterbury F&GCø Fish in Schools programme.

- **Project 1521/1531 Rangers and Compliance** ó Council wished to extend their thanks to Honorary Rangers who professionally volunteer their time.
- **Project Report - Licence Sales Fish**
- **Project Report - Licence Sales Game**
- **Project 1611 - Licence Agent Management** - It was noted that it was now a predominantly licence-on-line sales channel for agents (three current exceptions and ÷emergencyø(system failure) paper book reserves). Mr Teal noted that there were no defaults on payments beyond ÷late paymentøstatus.
- **Project Report Occupational Safety and Health Report** ó Council requested clarification on the liability of councillors (as opposed to directors) and review once the new legislation has passed

It was then moved that

The project reports be received:

- **Project 1111 – Sports Fish Population Monitoring**
- **Project 1111A – Trout Spawning Survey Report**
- **Project 1112 – Rangitikei Trout Fishery Management**
- **Project 1113 –River Control Fishery Assessment**
- **Project 1114 Game Bird Population Assessments**
- **Project 1114A – Banding Report**
- **Project 1121 – National Hunter Harvest Survey**

- **Project 1124 – Regional Hunter Survey**
- **Project 1181 – Game Bird Dispersal**
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 - **Project 1443 Promotions**
 - **Project 1351 – Hunter Training, Lake Omanu**
 - **Project 1354 Junior Angler Programme**
 - **Project 1521/1531 Rangers and Compliance**
 - **Project Report - Licence Sales Fish**
 - **Project Report - Licence Sales Game**
 - **Project 1611 - Licence Agent**
 - **Project Report Occupational Safety and Health Report**

Jim Cook/Andrew Morris
Carried

Chairman Cotsilinis commended staff for their excellent efforts in producing the project reports, and Council endorsed these sentiments.

11. Game Regulation Recommendation – Preliminary

Mallard

Mr Pilkington gave an overview where it was confirmed that mallard numbers monitored in April had returned to their normal range of population size but there were meteorologists warning of a severe El Nino weather pattern which could cause drought conditions on the eastern side of the North Island.

After discussion it was agreed that staff would send out an email questionnaire (as had been undertaken in 2013 and 2014) to obtain hunter opinion on season conditions for mallard length of season, and bag limit. This would be prefaced with a note of the principles to be cautious in view of the El Nino conditions forecast.

Paradise shelduck

Results from January trend counts would confirm whether decreasing trend in numbers is continuing and noted that no summer season for 2016 and that dispersal outcomes for aggregations would be undertaken using permits to disturb on an individual basis.

Shoveler duck

Numbers from the nationally co-ordinated counts indicate a stable population ó likely to be a status quo and conservative harvest conditions to be recommended.

Pukeko

Transect counts indicate a stable to increasing numbers in the region where counted

Red-legged Partridge

No changes anticipated

Black Swan

January counts will determine regulations using regulation setting policy

Pheasant

No changes anticipated

Californian quail

No changes anticipated

12. Options for Predator Control

Councillor Morris noted that initial findings from the mallard research study that predators may be a larger issue than previously thought and from his personal experiences on trapping a wetland he considered that there could be more practical guidance available to improve predator catching success. He considered that a seminar run in conjunction with Regional Council, DoC, and/or other organisations would be useful for a range of potential participants: lifestyle block owners, duck hunters, larger block landowners. Councillors Johnson and Tannock reiterated that while there is a willingness by hunters to trap and do something positive, there was a disconnect in practical knowledge of trap use and placement principles. It was agreed that staff would scope opportunities to undertake such a seminar (or series of seminars in a few centres).

13. Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions

Mr Teal provided an update on numbers of birds to be released at the three existing Upland Game Preserve with Special Conditions sites. These would be included in the considerations for recommendations of the Game Regulations in December 2015 meeting and subsequent February recommendations.

Mr Teal confirmed that Mr Grace (for Rathmoy Game Preserve) had provided numbers in the annual seasonal plan which indicated a desire to release the minimum number of 1000 birds to remain in consideration as an Upland Game Property with Special Conditions. He had further requested consideration by Council to reduce the minimum number of birds to be

released to 500 birds. Councillor Tannock considered that the recent historical outcomes from the game preserve resulting in hunting opportunities and interest in upland game hunting, that a temporary concession was worthy of consideration.

It was then moved that

The minimum number of pheasants that required to be released for Rathmoy Game Preserve would be reduced to 500 birds for this coming year – 2016 Game Season.

Andy Tannock/Eric Neumann

Carried

Mr Teal noted that the numbers for release in the annual 2016 seasonal plan for Te Para Hut would remain the same.

Mr Teal noted that the numbers planned for release for 2016 at Waituna Game Preserve would be up to 4000 pheasant and up to 400 red legged partridge.

There were no new requests seeking to release birds at sites and be classified as a site of Upland Game Property with Special Conditions.

14. Wairarapa Water Storage Project Update

Chairman Cottilinis confirmed that Wellington Fish & Game had resigned from the Wairarapa Water Use Project Stakeholders Advisory Group due to concerns over the process being followed. He further outlined a meeting that he, Mr Teal, and Bryce Johnson (NZFGC CE) had attended to express those views to the GWRC Chairman (Chris Laidlaw) and Group Manager (Nigel Corry). He was assured by the GWRC representatives that the emphasis was not to promote the project but to find out whether it was feasible or not. It was agreed that Fish & Game would enter into discussions outside the SAG group forum.

Council noted that the Proposed Natural Resource Regional Plan had aspects that potentially promoted water storage and thereby intensification of agriculture. Mr Shortis noted that there needed to be scrutiny of the Whaitua Committee's role in determining limits and targets, given the strong reliance on staff to upskill members and present information.

15. Lake Wairarapa – Treaty Settlement

Mr Teal gave an overview of an unsigned (and presumably draft) agreement between DOC and Fish & Game to manage the JK Donald wetland dated 2005. After discussion it was agreed that staff contact Roger Smailes, Reg Cull, Ian Buchanan, and Bill Avery to get background to inferred and actual management agreements in the 1980s through to 2007.

16. Mallard Research Projects (update)

Mr Teal gave an overview of current mallard research projects:

- Mallard telemetry project ó progressing well in Southland and Waikato with 60 transmitters being followed at each regional site;
- Pond Management Experiment ó one suite of experimental treatments being pursued by Northland Fish & Game
- Standardised Monitoring Technique ó variations around the country continue but it is anticipated that at least regional environmental zones will be undertaken in a similar way to provide comparison or aggregation of data possibilities;

Councillor Morris noted that the NZ Council meeting will be held in Hamilton with a focus on the mallard research project. Council considered that future research projects and information gaps needed to be defined urgently to keep a forward planning focus and momentum of the project moving forward.

It was moved that

A letter be sent to NZF&GC to ensure staff involved in mallard research meet, (ideally before the November NZ Council meeting) to ensure there is momentum and forward planning in the next stages of mallard research

Andy Tannock/Andrew Morris

Carried

17. Lake Wairarapa Update

Mr Teal noted that the findings from the Bartons Lagoon fish removal project would be presented at the Freshwater Sciences Society conference in November by GWRC staff.

Mr Teal had confirmed that he and NZFGC CE had met with the Office of Treaty Settlement staff in preliminary discussions on treaty settlement aspects.

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the progress of Wairarapa Moana Governance Group seeking Ramsar Wetland status (wetland of international importance) and still seeking support from local landholders.

18. Management Report 1 August – 30 September 2015

Mr Teal indicated that the submission on the GWRC Proposed Regional Plan had been extended until 23 October 2015 due to several parties seeking extensions. Mr Teal also indicated that funding requirements for Wellington Fish & Game's submissions had approved from the legal fund.

Mr Teal had progressed the concept of environmental duck management units for the North Island ó although this would not require any additional work at this stage to meet information requirements from banding or transect counts.

Mr Teal noted that the Waikanae River Recharge project had been formally commissioned and the adaptive management group convened to discuss further information requirements beyond the baseline information gathering.

Mr Teal noted that the new licence categories had been released, and also that this year's licence sales data could be obtained on an up-to-date basis for a particular issue date given that most licence agents are agency-on-line sales, with the rest being public-on-line sales.

Discussion ensued on the possibility that a principal sponsor for the Children's Fish Out day may decline sponsorship this year.

It was moved that

Wellington Fish & Game Council underwrite up to \$5,000 from the Compliance and Reparation Reserve should the principal sponsor not be forthcoming with sponsorship.

Andy Tannock/Andrew Morris

Carried

Mr Teal updated that Fish & Game and NZDF were re-engaging to define a memorandum of understanding to confirm restricted access for anglers.

After discussion it was moved that

The management report for 1 August – 30 September 2015 be received.

Andy Tannock/Jim Cook

Carried

19. **Fishing Licence Report and Game Licence Report**

After brief discussion it was moved that

The Fish Licence Sales and Game Licence Sales reports as at 31 August 2015 be received.

Eric Neumann/Andy Tannock

Carried

20. **Expenditure Report**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of a dashboard report which summarised revenue and expenditure variances from budget.

After discussion it was moved that

the Expenditure Report for 31 August 2015 and Financial Transactions for July and August 2015 be approved

Eric Neumann/ Andy Tannock

Carried

21. **Correspondence**

Brief discussion ensued on correspondence and media reports relating to the One Plan implementation of the One Plan regional plan by Horizons Regional Council (Gary Taylor EDS dated 30 September 2015 to Horizons RC, Phil

Teal dated 1 October 2015 to Horizons RC, and Wanganui Chronicle (Zaryd Wilson) dated 29 September 2015).

Further brief discussion ensure on other correspondence and media reports after which it was then moved that

Correspondence and Media reports for August – September be received
Andrew Morris/Jim Cook

Carried

22. General Business

Mr Cook provided a brief overview of an opportunity to obtain up to 1000 one-day-old pheasant chicks from a pheasant breeder, who would incubate the eggs rather than dispose of them in the early shoulder of production. Mr Cook considered that we could obtain the chicks if we covered the electricity costs of up to \$200 and get interested hunters to look after them and raise till 8 weeks old.

It was moved that

*Up to \$200 be made available to cover potential costs of electricity
for an incubator to hatch up to 1000 day-old pheasant chicks*

Andrew Morris/Eric Neumann

Carried

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

Next Meeting to be held: Coachman Hotel, Palmerston North, Tuesday 8 December 2015 at 3.00pm.

Chairman_____

Date_____