

**WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON  
TUESDAY 10 OCTOBER 2017 AT 3.05PM AT CLUB WAIRARAPA, 20 ESSEX STREET,  
MASTERTON**

**1. Present:**

Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Malcolm Francis, Paul Shortis, Simon Muckley, Andy Tannock, Don Scott, Andrew Morris, Chris O'Meara, Jim Cook, Brad Johnson, Dan Waechter.

**2. In Attendance:**

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Matt Kavermann, Peter Wilson.

Licenceholders: Graeme McKenzie, John Pansters, Colin Shore (Honorary Ranger)

**3. Apologies:**

Councillors Eric Neumann, Marc Flaws.

Staff: Hamish Carnachan,

It was then moved that:

***the apologies be accepted.***

**Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara**

Carried

**4. Conflicts of Interest**

A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of Interest. No new conflicts of interest were declared.

**5. Minutes of Previous Meeting of 22 August 2017**

After a brief discussion it was moved that:

***the Minutes of the Meeting of Wellington Fish & Game Council of 22 August 2017 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.***

**Don Scott/Jim Cook**

Carried

**6. Matters Arising**

Mr Teal confirmed that a response had been provided to Zealandia Wildlife Trust indicating the lack of robust hypotheses in the research proposal to remove perch eggs from the lower reservoir at Karori Sanctuary. Councillor Morris indicated that NZ Council were actively considering policy on removal of sportsfish and procedures on processing applications.

Mr Teal also confirmed that Alton Perrie had provided further information on his research proposal to sample sportsfish but required further clarification and refinement before granting of permit.

**7. NZ Council Business**

Councillor Morris provided an update of the NZ Council meeting held on 29 September 2017.

Councillor Morris confirmed that Martin Taylor had been appointed as the Chief Executive of NZ Fish & Game Council and would be starting in early November.

Councillor Morris noted that Nelson/Marlborough Fish & Game Council does not pay rates on land that it owns due to local District Council policies that allow for rates remission on application. It was agreed to contact South Wairarapa and Horowhenua district councils to confirm if their policies had changed to allow for rates remission on Wellington Fish & Game Council owned land that is used for conservation purposes.

Councillor Morris noted that the research projects that Corina Jordan had been involved in needed to be concluded or alternative course of action proceeded with – with all final payments confirmed.

Councillor Morris confirmed that Hawke's Bay Fish & Game Council had confirmed that at the next election it will return to having a Council of up to twelve elected councillors from the current maximum of eight elected councillors.

Councillor Morris noted that the NZ Fish & Game Council Communications Manager Don Rood had responded to a query from the Ombudsman relating to having councillors' personal contact details on the website. It was confirmed that Wellington Council's preference is that any communication directly to councillors be sent via the Wellington office as one point of contact.

Councillor Morris informed that the NZ Fish & Game Council sponsorship of a trout fishing television segment *Pure Fly* was scheduled to start on 10 October.

It was moved that:

***the report by Councillor Morris of the Meeting of NZ Fish & Game Council of 29 September 2017 be received.***

**Malcolm Francis/Jim Cook**

Carried

Mr Teal provided a final draft itinerary for NZ Council field trip for their November Meeting which would start on the Kapiti Coast, and include stops at Manawatu River (to discuss regional planning issues), Rangitikei River (to outline research initiatives), Mangatainoka, Carterton (to discuss the irrigation project), and Lake Wairarapa (for an overview of management issues).

**8. Public Participation**

Chairman Cotsilinis invited members of the public to speak on any particular issues – with Graeme McKenzie requested to provide some input into the preliminary discussion regarding setting of hunting conditions for 2018 game season.

Councillor Tannock noted the recent passing of Grahame Hamilton who was a recipient of a Wellington Fish & Game merit award in 2009 for his contributions to the day to day management of the JK Donald Wetland.

**9. Health & Safety Update**

Mr Teal provided an overview of the Health & Safety report. He noted that Worksafe NZ had advised that it was unwise to carry a pillion passenger on a 4WD bike but was permissible if it was the most effective method. It was confirmed that staff should be carrying personal locator beacons (PLBs) in the field. Discussion ensued regarding under what circumstances drift dives and other field activities could be curtailed if water quality deteriorated that was not suitable for primary contact. Confirmation was sought by Councillor Scott on extent of Council indemnity and liability – with the opinion sought by NZ Council on the matter to be distributed. After further discussion it was moved that

***The Health and Safety Report for August and September be received***

**Jim Cook/Andrew Morris**

Carried

**10. Potential Insurance Options for Public Liability Insurance**

Mr Teal outlined an initial proposal presented to Fish & Game Managers in August to cover public liability insurance for licenceholders. Further clarification and refinement were currently being sought by NZ Council staff.

Dr Kavermann provided an overview of the principles and concept for public liability insurance used by NZ Deerstalkers Association. He further outlined the requirements of NZ Defence Force (NZDF) to use NZDF land to access the Upper Rangitikei River, including: personal public liability insurance to cover incidents such as fires and people injured, reducing NZDF administration of permits, completion of an unexploded ordinance course (NZDF), helicopter operators only allowing anglers (no firearms), and if guided the guides will

need public liability insurance to cover all participants. There were a select group of helicopter operators currently access the sites who all cover commercial public liability insurance as part of the business. Dr Kavermann noted that there were currently 950 permits issued through the website portal for backcountry licences, but the actual number of active anglers would be probably less than a third of that number. He received a quote for up to 1000 anglers to be covered by public liability insurance at the site at a cost of \$7000 – even though some anglers may be covered with alternate insurance arrangements.

It was agreed to include a question in the email hunter survey to be undertaken in late November asking hunters for their perceptions of value of public liability insurance and if it was to be made a requirement what would they consider reasonable.

Councillor Johnson considered it would be a preferred option to have a blanket coverage for all anglers and hunters, rather than for backcountry licence holders only, and that the benefits of this be communicated to licenceholders.

Council considered it needed a strategy to introduce any insurance options if it proceeded either:

- rely that the anglers/hunters have it (with associated compliance issues); or
- Every hunter and angler pays a contribution;
- National Policy required to ensure consistent uptake.

Councillor Francis noted that if considered appropriate for all anglers and hunters to have public liability insurance than there should be efforts to increase awareness of the health and safety liability issues to indicate the benefits of having the insurance.

Dr Kavermann also informed Council that there was a relative urgency for public liability insurance to be confirmed for the Upper Rangitikei River as NZDF wanted the issues concluded prior to the commencement of the 2018/19 fishing season. The ‘worst case’ scenario could be only 100 anglers actively seek to fish the Upper Rangitikei which would equate to \$70 per angler. Council noted that the overall cost of \$7000 could be underwritten by Wellington Council and even though the end goal is for ‘user pay’ principles. It was then moved that

***Wellington Fish & Game Council would underwrite up to \$7000 for public liability insurance for backcountry licence and charge each angler \$25 on issuance of backcountry licence for Rangitikei River.***

**Malcolm Francis/Don Scott**

Carried

It was agreed that a letter would be sent to NZ Council requesting that they actively pursue options for NZ wide public liability insurance for hunters and anglers. It was further suggested that NZ Council concurrently investigate options of 'self-insuring' (within Fish & Game dedicated funds) up to \$2 million coverage following risk assessments.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to guides regarding any charges.

**11. Code of Conduct for Sports Fishing**

Council further discussed the paper prepared by Robert Sowman (NZ Council Policy and Planning Manager) dated July 2017 entitled "***Code of Conduct for Sports Fishing***". It was considered that a lot of details on ethical behaviour should be included as regulations rather than listed in a code of conduct e.g. barbless hooks. Other ethical statements were too ambiguous and ill-defined such as "taking more than your immediate needs" is not relevant if you have a freezer available. Another statement relating to digging fish offal into the ground should be considered in context as it can encourage feral pigs to root up areas. Other issues required further discussion and scrutiny such as why Fish & Game allow the use of treble hooks (as allowed in regulations).

It was then moved that

***The comments and recommendations from the working committee and Wellington Fish & Game Council be sent to NZ Council for consideration.***

**Dan Waechter/Don Scott**

Carried

**12. 2018 Wellington Fish & Game Council Meeting Schedule/Venues**

The following meeting schedule was confirmed for 2018. There was one amendment from previous draft list – 27 March 2018 vs 10 April 2018 due to changes in budgeting information timetable. After discussion it was confirmed that 3:00pm was a suitable time for commencement of meeting.

13 February 2018	Palmerston North
27 March 2018	Upper Hutt
12 June 2018	Masterton
21 August 2018	Palmerston North
9 October 2018	Upper Hutt
4 December 2018	Masterton

**13. Preliminary Consideration of Hunting Season Conditions for Mallard Duck for 2018 Game Season Application to Hold Sports Fish**

Dr Kavermann provided a brief overview of the information at hand and referred to the Project Report 1114 Game Bird Population Assessments and Project Report 1121 National Hunter Harvest Survey 2017: the spring breeding and summer seasons were very wet (number of ponds in April count), high duck counts noted in April transect flights, but in contrast hunters success was not noted as exceptionally high from the game bird harvest survey. It was suggested that the email hunter survey could ask the following questions:

- Hunters be informed of the key decision making parameters and then seek their opinion on options for mallard season limits being: status quo (8 birds for 8 weeks) or more relaxed (10 birds for 8 weeks);
- Hunter preferences for three or five shot multi-shot shotguns;
- Hunter preferences for continued restriction of no magazine extension for multi-shot shotguns permissible.

Councillor O'Meara did not believe the latter questions on hunter preferences relating to multi-shot shotguns added insight.

Graeme McKenzie considered that the populations and harvest should be managed through limits and season lengths. He considered that there should be fewer rules on harvest methods as rules can be seen as a barrier to participation – and establishing additional rules for multi-shot restrictions for shotguns was not necessary. Councillor Johnson considered that there were ethical aspects to allowing 8 magazine extensions and whether they were necessary for successful hunting: (1) are they used for follow up shots to humanely get downed birds; and (2) the motivations and views on why hunters hunt – promoting an ethical approach to getting food on the table. There was an element of hunting for enjoyment but not necessarily linked to shot gun capacity. Mr McKenzie noted the long term effects of banning semi-auto shotguns in Australia 20 years ago, and considered any restrictions to magazine capacity should be considered with caution – to ensure continued lawful and justified purpose use. Councillor Tannock stated that the ethical considerations of hunting for birds in range and focus on harvest for the table were principal considerations. He considered that with modern guns and ammunition that with three shot restrictions that most hunters would still go game bird hunting. Councillor Morris concurred that a cautious approach to should be taken to portray hunting for food. Councillor Johnson considered there was a progression over the last 20 years from use of semi-auto multi-shot shotguns (pinned) to use of five shot multi-shot shotguns to use of magazine extensions and it was timely to consider the ethical aspects.

Councillor O’Meara considered that the status quo in Wellington region was an appropriate approach for waterfowl hunting – and magazine extensions could still be used for Canada geese. Councillor Francis reiterated that public perception and attitudes was an important consideration in considering firearm restrictions. Mr Wilson noted that the Firearms Safety Council was a voice for firearms owners but noted that NZ Fish & Game Council was not a member. The Mountain Safety Council was another potential advocate for firearm safety and public awareness of the perceptions surrounding their use but their resourcing had been severely curtailed in recent years.

**14. Project Reports – For the Year Ended 31 August 2017**

Chairman Cotsilinis congratulated staff for their professional reports and outstanding efforts throughout the year to complete activities in all functional areas.

Council considered each project report – receiving a brief overview from staff on each report and an opportunity to ask questions.

**Project Report 1111** Councillor Francis confirmed anglers accounts that the Ruamahanga river fisheries decline which is matched from the monitoring results. It was noted that the core river analysis for Wellington region had shown a declining trend from 2013. It was also noted that the wet weather had made drift dive monitoring difficult to schedule and some dives were undertaken at acceptable turbidity/visibility but not ideal. The completion of the monitoring projects by dedicated staff group was acknowledged

**Project Report 1111A** It was acknowledged that extra work had been required to confirm spawning streams that had not been checked within the last ten years for the Greater Wellington Regional Plan. This had also given rise to the eDNA research project.

**Project Report 1112** already received at June 2017 meeting no further comments

**Project Report 1113** already received at June 2017 meeting no further comments

**Project Report 1114** The completion of the gamebird monitoring project was able to be completed with the assistance of volunteers and temporary staff.

**Project Report 1114A** The completion of the mallard banding project was able to be completed with the assistance of volunteers and temporary staff which was much appreciated.

**Project Report 1121** The results from the National Harvest Survey indicated that there was not huge increase in birds harvested. It was confirmed that the numbers of ducks harvested correlated very well with season length.

**Project Report 1124** The regional hunter survey provided insight into hunter opinions that public land was important but private land is still very important for accessing the hunting resource. Most hunters had considered their impression that opening weekend was better or the same as previous seasons. It was noted that hunters were concerned about predator control (which mirrored the public awareness) – and that concerns on steel shot and too few ducks were down as a concern.

**Project Report 1181** there were no concerning trends in game bird nuisance events above normal rates noted.

**Project Report 1211** Council commended staff on the RMA advocacy undertaken during the year. The Hutt Valley and Kapiti angling clubs acknowledged the access they had to staff (Peter Wilson) in planning their submissions and subsequent follow up with consultants for GWRC. The interaction with staff in assisting with submissions reflects a request by Councillor Waechter to enable clubs/anglers to get involved in the resource consenting processes.

**Project Report 1313** 735 access permits for hunters were issued in addition to other specific areas managed for access to public land or forests.

**Project Report Communications**

Council acknowledged the consistently high standard of communications undertaken during the year through different channels and the work undertaken by staff.

**Project Report 1351** Council acknowledged the work undertaken by Jason Johnstone in running the Novice hunters programme at Lake Omanu, Foxton.

**Project Report 1354** Council acknowledged the Fish in Schools programme including the web-based curriculum module.

**Project Report 1521 Rangers**

Council acknowledged the work undertaken by the numerous honorary rangers. Dr Kavermann noted that there were currently 25 active rangers. He stated that there were unrealistic expectations for checking the objective

numbers stated in the Management Plan (10% check of total licence base per year not realistic checking rate) and should be formally reviewed targets next year. The goals need to be reviewed and stretch goals included. Councillor Muckley suggested that Fish & Game needed to make sure that we had a reasonable rate of replacement of experienced rangers – and acknowledged that kpi's were not that useful for motivation. He considered a regular liaison with clubs to encourage recruitment of rangers was warranted.

***Project Report Licence Sales and Agents*** Council expressed their gratitude to the administration staff for reliably presenting the information.

Chairman Cottilinis reiterated that the team had done very well to undertake the work and present it in such professional reports.

It was then moved that

***Project Reports for 2016/17 Financial Year be received***

**Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

**15. Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions**

Mr Teal noted that there was a need to tidy up agreements with the operators although they could operate under existing conditions until this was finalised. He noted that there will be some issues with one adjoining landowner at one site. It was agreed that it was the responsibility of the applicant to establish an agreement with neighbours to operate above 2000 birds released.

**16. GWRC Western Rivers Global Resource Consents**

There was brief discussion on the submission for the resource consent applications for the global consent GWRC (Flood Protection) which covered the Hutt, Wainuiomata, Otaki, and Waikanae rivers. Peter Wilson gave a brief overview of some issues that arose from a consultant using MPI modelling ( a mis-use if the information) to establish trout spawning sites, when Fish & Game had a much more comprehensive database based on empirical evidence. There was also discussion of potentially meeting with iwi to discuss the progress of their consultations which are being run concurrently.

It was moved that

***The report on the GWRC Western Rivers Global Resource Consents be received***

**Dan Waechter/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

**17. One Plan Implementation - Update**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview that the regional council were considering partial Plan Changes to the regional plan. It was apparent that the regional council had commissioned some work by planners to provide advice and an agricultural economist to provide an economic and planning perspective.

It was then moved

***That the update report on the One Plan implementation be received***

**Jim Cook/Andrew Morris**

Carried

**18. Wairarapa Water Update**

Councillor Shortis gave a brief summary of recent Wairarapa Water's media outputs noting that the strategy had now changed focus from economic focus to promoting the 'environmental benefits' of flushing flows and social benefits in securing town supply continuity. The benefits of the aforementioned benefits to the community and environment have not been clearly articulated by Wairarapa Water beyond concept.

The progression of the project was in limbo while the next Government is formed, with a possible course of action being the Regional Council proposing to ask for a further sum from MPI accelerated irrigation fund.

After further discussion it was moved that

***a programme of public awareness be developed and that a request for additional funding be made commiserate with the programme***

**Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter**

Carried

It was then moved that

***That the update report on the Wairarapa Water Project be received***

**Dan Waechter/Chris O'Meara**

Carried

**19. Wairarapa Moana Update**

Mr Wilson confirmed that the work undertaken on local farms indicated that the economic case for reducing N leaching while maintaining profitability can be shown and currently can't be refuted.

It was then moved

***That the report on the update to Lake Wairarapa management be received***

**Malcolm Francis /Chris O'Meara**

Carried

Adjourned for dinner at 6:30pm

The meeting reconvened at 7:20

**20. Mallard Research Project**

Mr Teal indicated that a mallard research meeting would be held on 26 October 2017 that would hopefully indicate direction for research in the next 3-5 years. Discussion ensued on how the findings from the current mallard research work could be strategically communicated to hunters and socialised.

After discussion it was moved

***To receive the update on the mallard research***

**Chris O'Meara / Malcolm Francis**

Carried

**21. Junior Angler Participation – Fish Out Day – Palmerston North**

A brief overview of preparations for the Children's Fish Out Day planned for Hokowhitu Lagoon on 12 November 2017 had been progressed very competently and ahead of schedule. Council acknowledged the work of Dr Kavermann and the Manawatu Freshwater Anglers Club (and Don Scott) in particular for maintaining momentum.

After discussion it was moved

***To receive the update on the novice fish and hunting programmes***

**Andrew Morris/ Jim Cook**

Carried

**22. Management Report 1 August – 30 September 2017**

Mr Teal indicated that he had had preliminary discussions with Wellington Water on potential MOU for use and contributions for data on Hutt River drift dive counts.

Mr Teal noted that there had been a positive response from the local community to releasing trout into the Otaki reservoir and river, although long term plans for the site had not been formalised.

Mr Teal noted that further details were being sought from Cawthron Institute, who had provided an initial overview of where to sample for trout otoliths in the Rangitikei and Hutt catchments – which will allow this to be incorporated into a summer field programme.

After further discussion it was moved that

***The management report for 1 August – 30 September 2017 be received.***

**Chris O'Meara/Andrew Morris**

Carried

**23. Fish & Game Licence Sales**

Mr Teal referred to the summary in the project report documents noting that licence sales for fish were approximately 7% down on previous year's sales and game licence sales were slightly up.

It was also confirmed that the 'trial' of different licence categories is at year 3 of 3 before a more substantial review would take place.

Mr Teal also provided a brief overview of the efforts being made regarding marketing opportunities being discussed to influence recruitment, retention, and re-engagement.

After further discussion it was moved

***The Fish Licence Sales report and Game Licence Sales Report as at 31 August 2017 be received***

**Jim Cook/Andy Tannock**

Carried

**24. Expenditure Report**

After brief discussion it was moved that

***the Expenditure Report for 31 August 2017 and Financial Transactions for July and August 2017 be approved***

**Malcolm Francis/Brad Johnson**

Carried

Mr Teal noted that there will be a necessary upgrade of computers and up to two vehicles as part of asset replacement that was budgeted for.

**25. Correspondence and Media**

It was noted that the Kapiti Coast District Council had delayed progression of the Otaraua Reserve until potential alternate road access options had been explored. This would unlikely to have any effect on the viability of a fish-out pond being established at the site.

**26. General Business**

It was clarified that there are no regulatory bylaws restricting craft on Lake Wairarapa and the restrictions noted in the permit issued by Fish & Game has been removed.

Councillor Scott provided an overview of his report on a recent visit to Otaki and Waikanae reservoir fisheries and confirmed their significant potential for establishing fisheries including novice fish out day.

Mr Wilson gave a brief overview of GWRC Proposed Regional Plan with an update of modeling undertaken – to maintain ecosystem health, nitrogen for the Ruamahanga catchment is fully allocated (slightly over allocated). Evidence was being developed to show this is economically and ecologically achievable.

There being no further business the meeting was concluded at 8.35pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Upper Hutt Cosmopolitan Club, Upper Hutt  
Tuesday 5 December 2017 at 3.00pm.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_