

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 12 AUGUST 2025 AT 3.05PM AT CLUB WAIRARAPA, 20 ESSEX STREET, MASTERTON.

1. Present:

Chairman Paul Dewar, Councillors Jennifer Yanko, Jim Cook, Terry Inglis, Ben Hancock, Kieran Bell, Andrew McGregor, Steve Brown.

Video Link: Prof. Stephen Haslett, Aaron Passey.

In Attendance:

Fish and Game Staff: Phil Teal, Dr Matt Kavermann, Hamish Carnachan

Public: Robert Sowman, Mike Meredith, John Pansters, Michael Pearse, John Hancock

Welcome and Confirmation of Agenda

Chairman Dewar opened the meeting and welcomed Councillors and staff.

2. Apologies:

It was noted that apologies were received from:

Councillor Damon Taylor, Richard McIntyre.

Staff: Ami Coughlan

Licence holder: Simon Robertson, Aaron Passey (for late Zoom link)

It was then moved that

the apologies received be accepted

Jim Cook/Terry Inglis

Carried

3. Conflict of Interest

The Conflicts of Interest Register was discussed. Councillor Brown notified that as his wife was not seeking re-election onto Horizons Regional Council (and would therefore no longer be the Chair of Horizons Regional Council after 11 October 2025) that his stated conflict of interest would lapse before the next scheduled Fish and Game Council meeting.

It was moved that

An amendment to the Conflict of Interest Register be noted for Councillor Brown to reflect changes in circumstances and that he would no longer have any stated conflicts of interest after 11 October 2025

Kieran Bell/Ben Hancock

Carried

Chair Dewar confirmed that there were no specific items that needed additional conflicts of interests to be identified for the current agenda.

Mr Teal confirmed that the current Conflict-of-Interest register, and the Conflict-of-Interest Management Plan would be updated.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting of 27 May 2025

Following consideration of the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish and Game Council of 27 May 2025 it was moved that ***the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 27 May 2025 be approved and confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.***

Jim Cook/Ben Hancock

Carried

5. Matters Arising:

Mr Teal referred to the Action List resulting from the 27 May 2025 meeting, noting the following actions that had been progressed:

- Feedback was provided by Wellington Council to NZ Council that supported the recommendation for licence fees for 2025-2026 with additional comments that warranted emphasis:
 - Wellington Council supported the recommended licence fees recommended by NZ Council.
 - The increased licence fee recommendation is near to inflation.
 - Support work on determining if price sensitivity will affect some licence categories.
- Feedback was provided by Wellington Council to NZ Council on Family Fishing Licence noting:
 - Wellington Fish and Game Council would support amended conditions to the Family Licence that allow for two people to be listed as adult (whole season) licence holders and children listed to enable fishing together or separately but not independently at different locations.
 - NZ Council ensure conditions of use of the Family Licence are clearly defined to ensure they have enforceable regulations for compliance purposes and information on the conditions of use for a Family Licences are easily accessible to anglers
 - The price of the licence by based on an objectively price setting mechanism for any amended Family Licence,
 - how this amended category fits in with the overall category review being undertaken as part of the Price Optimisation Project, and
 - that a formal review into switching behaviour be undertaken at Year 1 and 3.

- Servicing the Family Licence Holder(s):
 - It was suggested that only one physical licence should be issued.
 - Council expressed a preference that adult anglers listed on a Family Licence should be communicated independently when using electronic communications but as one 'unit' when hard copy communications (magazine) are distributed.
- A letter was sent to Corina Jordan acknowledging her contributions to Fish and Game following her resignation from the NZ Council's CE role.
- Feedback was provided to NZ Council indicating that Wellington Council was satisfied with the process for forecasting licence sales and acknowledged that forecast estimates were in line with expectations of a stable sales pattern.
- Feedback was provided to NZ Council on the draft Health and Safety Policy
- Feedback was provided to NZ Council on the draft Lone Worker Support Policy
- Feedback was provided on the Draft Operational Policy – Resource Management and Legislation
- Recommendations were provided to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing to change the wording for Anglers' Notice regulations for fishing at Hokowhitu Lagoon, Palmerston North to have the same limit for brown or rainbow trout as for Manawatu River
- A letter was sent to NZ Council to actively identify legal mechanisms - either already in use or that could be developed - to establish a specific purpose fund for access management (so that the monies were not used to 'fund' the Fish and Game system). Any legal structures and approaches would need to be developed to encourage donations and support for the concept.
- It was confirmed that there was a continuing consultation process regarding the simplification of fishing regulations – with the intent to consult all angling clubs in the region regarding the principles and implications.

6. New Zealand Fish and Game Council Business

A. Update from NZ Fish and Game Council Appointee

Councillor Haslett provided a brief overview of the key topics covered at the meeting of NZ Council on 27 and 28 June 2025, and referred to the documentation summary of this meeting titled Summary of F&G meeting 175 by Barrie Barnes NZ Council Chair dated 9 July 2025.

He confirmed that the Minister had not approved an increase in licence fee, and that this would have a flow on effect regarding regional and NZC budgets. He confirmed that there would be another meeting at the end of August to discuss the budget allocations in light of the Minister's decision. He noted that one potential outcome of the budgetary realignment was that there would be no research officer appointed – which would lead to continued lack of direction in research function.

Discussion ensued on the potential consequences for Fish and Game of two years of restricted licence fee adjustments including: increased constraints on undertaking the advocacy function, and additional pressure to make changes within Fish and Game system as it would be more difficult for Fish and Game to operate under status quo arrangements.

It was then moved that

The report from Wellington Council's appointee Councillor Haslett on NZ Fish and Game Council business and overview of the NZ Council meeting 27 and 28 June 2025 and additional update of NZ Council business be received

Kieran Bell/Terry Inglis

Carried

7. Public Forum

An opportunity was afforded to members of the public to discuss specific issues with Council.

Chris Sparks (a farmer on the shores of Lake Wairarapa and licence holder) discussed the extent of the black swan aggregations on his and neighbouring properties. He discussed the desire to work together with Fish and Game, iwi, and other landholders to ameliorate the effects of aggregations including actions such as: increasing harvest pressure – through more liberal limits or organised hunts –and the effectiveness of permits to disturb.

Discussion ensued on whether the numbers had increased, or the distribution of the birds had changed. The practical difficulties in actively hunting the birds were also outlined – with the birds being disturbed from a long distance can hinder effectively targeting them. It was noted that, at the conclusion of the season, relatively high numbers of birds were still present in the main wetlands adjacent to the lake (e.g., Matthews Lagoon). Dr Kavermann provided an overview to give context of the numbers of birds at Lake Wairarapa – a relatively stable population when observed in January apart from three years ago – but were increasing on the Farewell Spit in the Nelson area which is part of the Central NZ black swan management unit. Mr

Sparks noted that the aggregations were a particular problem during the winter months after the end of the main waterfowl season.

Councillor Brown suggested staff explore options for a cull, if needed, and progress accordingly. Councillor Inglis noted that increasing the season limit over King's Birthday and Opening would be a logical first step. Councillor McGregor considered that if a cull was undertaken that hunters should have an opportunity to participate – noting that solely relying on increasing the limit might not be effective enough. Dr Kavermann noted the need to liaise with landowners and assess whether they would be open to developing hunting opportunities on the main affected properties.

8. Proposed Fish and Game Legislation Changes

Chairman Dewar referred to the key changes proposed in the legislative review:

1. Licence Collection & Revenue Distribution

NZ Council will issue licences, collect revenue, and allocate funds to regions based on licence holder activity, while ensuring support for key activities.

2. National Policy Framework

NZ Council will set binding national policies on compliance, monitoring, corporate functions, advocacy, and health & safety to ensure consistency across regions.

3. Advocacy & Court Action

Regions will continue local advocacy within budgets and priorities but under a binding national advocacy strategy. Court action (other than licence offences) requires NZ Council or Minister approval.

4. Governance Improvements/Adjustments

Intention is for NZ Council to be comprise of Fish & Game Chairs. Councils will reduce to eight elected members, voting eligibility will expand, and the Minister may appoint or remove councillors for just cause.

5. Transparency

NZ Council will compile 13 annual reports into one consolidated report for Parliament, standardise templates for work plans and reporting, and improve information sharing.

6. Specialist Support

NZ Council will be able to employ scientists, planners, and lawyers to work across regions.

7. Staffing and NZ Council Resources

NZ Council will expand functions, hiring its own Chief Executive and specialist staff (e.g., freshwater ecologists, population biologists, planners, lawyers, accountants, and governance specialists). Regions will retain their own CEs/managers and staff but follow NZC HR policies, gaining access to expertise while keeping local operational control.

8. Local Decision-making

Regional Councils retain authority over species and habitat management, including seasons, bag limits, and hunting/fishing conditions via Anglers & Game Notices.

Chairman Dewar noted that the Council needed to consider the proposed legislative changes and decide if the Council was going to send feedback to the Minister.

After discussion the main topics of clarification were:

- **Retention of the Advocacy – and what advocacy looks like**
What is the expectation of extent of advocacy for species, habitat, and access. Clarification on the precedent issue that would require the Minister to intervene in proposed court action. It was considered that the purpose of the function required Fish and Game to retain an advocacy voice. This has been a concern expressed by several angling clubs that this advocacy function will so under pressure that it will be rendered ineffective.
- **Resource Allocation**
Concern expressed regarding unintended consequences of allocation process of funds - given centralisation of revenue collection - even if a tiered approach is undertaken to allocation – (i) core activity allocation, (ii) allocation on licence holder activity as contestable fund, (iii) business case proposals. Given that NZ Council will be empowered to hire additional expertise, this will come at the expense of regional allocations.
- **NZ Council Composition**
Concern that requiring regional Chairs to automatically commit to being NZ Council governor is too much for a volunteer and time commitment for those in employment.

Mr Sparks and Mr Pearse left the meeting at 3:40pm

Dr Kavermann temporarily left the meeting at 3.45pm

After further discussion it was moved

to write a letter to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing outlining concerns on changes to the legislation that affect: effectiveness of advocacy function, fair and reasonable resource allocation to regions,

and the composition of the New Zealand Council should be largely retained as status quo.

Paul Dewar/Jim Cook

Carried

It was noted that there was a need to anticipate the answers to any questions sent to the Minister - as it was not necessarily prudent for the Minister to proffer clarity on ambiguous issues. It was further acknowledged that the strength of submissions to the Minister lies in a collective regional response, although four regions have already independently written to the Minister on this issue.

Mr Teal noted that at the NZ Council meeting of 28 June 2025 the Minister had indicated that an exposure draft would be available to all Fish and Game Councils to make urgent feedback to the Minister prior to the Bill being presented to Parliament for its first reading. NZ Council staff have since indicated that this process may not be progressed.

Chairman Dewar noted that the NZ Council Chair had clarified how regional Fish and Game Councils can respond to the draft Act (anticipated for release in late October/mid-November) – Fish and Game Councils can respond to the Environment Select Committee when submissions are called for – and this is done as Council collective – not as a councillor individually.

9. Regional Governance – Chairman’s Report

Chairman Dewar provided a brief overview on regional governance matters. There were no specific issues that needed to be highlighted that were relevant to governance functions but provided an overview of key operational outcomes.

After brief further discussion it was moved

that the Chairman’s verbal report on regional governance issues be received.

Jim Cook/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

10. Inter-regional Business - Governance

A. Regional Chairs’ Forum Update

Chairman Dewar provided an overview of the proposed Chair Forum meetings for June and July 2025 – the former meeting cancelled. In the July meeting some discussion focused on the North Canterbury Fish and Game’s proposal to centralise staffing arrangements.

B. Shared Resources Update

Chairman Dewar provided a brief update on the operations of the shared resources arrangements between Wellington and Taranaki Fish and Game

Councils – which was working well with no material issues that needed to be brought to the attention of governors.

It was then moved that

Council receives the update report presented the Chairman on Inter-regional Business – Governance for the previous period since the last meeting of Council.

Ben Hancock/Steve Brown

Carried

Councillor Haslett left the meeting at 4:00pm.

11. Draft Annual Budget and Project Plan

Discussion ensued on the approach to the budget given that the Minister had declined a licence fee increase as recommended by NZ Council – and there had been no formal advice as to how the regional budgets would be adjusted accordingly.

Chairman Dewar provided an overview the options that Council could pursue to handle the uncertainty of the budgeting process in the interim. This included:

- (1) Council could approve the budget and rely on reserves for cost overruns - with the two main items identified as increasing for the next financial year budget being provision for increases in salaries and aerial trend counts.
- (2) Council could wait and see what approach NZ Council takes to the budget shortfalls and new project funding.
- (3) Work on the basis that last year's budget will be the maximum amount approved.

Discussion ensued on the amount of cash reserves and the possibility of using reserves if the direction was to follow the draft recommended budget with a shortfall in the allocation – i.e. run a small deficit. It was acknowledged that adjustments could be made to the budget once clarity had been provided by NZ Council.

It was then moved that

the recommended budget be approved as the final working budget and that general cash reserves be used to fund any shortfall

Steve Brown/Terry Inglis

Carried

Brief discussion ensued on the licence fee structure and effect on overall income – focusing on the risk on increasing the licence fee in price sensitive categories,

and the revamped Family Licence being a potential loss leader and discounting for two adult licence holders living in the same household.

12. Strategic Matters

A. Risk Management Review

Mr Teal reiterated the previous update that there had been no change to the risk level for avian influenza H5N1 strain and that the risk would be low during the winter months for the likely transfer vectors.

13. Policy and Legislation

A. Arms Act Review

There had been little public facing activity from the Ministry of Justice as they considered the public submissions received in February 2025 that will inform draft policy proposals to be presented to Cabinet. It is anticipated that the tranche of work on the Arms Act review will be progressed by the end of the 2025 calendar year.

B. Wildlife Act Review

Department of Conservation officials have confirmed that there is an active review to reform the Wildlife Act but there has been no clarification on the timetable or priorities for progression. There have been some urgent amendments relating to issues that have arisen relating to a recent judicial review of DoC's authorisations for disturb and cull authorisations resulting from under section 53, 54, and 56 (permits to disturb /kill and hold) – which impacts on Fish and Game issue permits.

C. Resource Management Act Review

The Government has announced the third tranche of RM reforms replacing the Resource Management Act with two new laws - the Natural Environment Act and the Planning Act - to separate land-use planning from natural resource management. The reforms also aim to reduce the need for resource consents by expanding permitted activities approach, alongside increased compliance monitoring. It is anticipated that these replacement Bills will be lodged in Parliament by the end of the calendar year.

The RM Team co-ordinated a submission on the consultations on National Direction (due 27 July 2025) – essentially National Policy Statements relating to infrastructure/renewable electricity generation, primary production, and freshwater.

D. Organisational Policies

Mr Teal provided an overview of the Policy Folder which is separated out into various sections: Governance, Human Resources, Health and Safety, Procurement, Financial, and Operational. He noted that while he was making

progress there may be assistance required from external providers to hasten development and review.

14. Health and Safety Report

A. Health and Safety Report for May and June 2025

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the Health and Safety report for May and June 2025 – noting that there had been no accidents or notable incidents are reported that are required to be brought to the attention of Council.

He further noted that there was currently a review of Health and Safety policies being co-ordinated by NZ Council.

Mr Teal confirmed that a review of hazard risk management was also being actively undertaken by Wellington and Taranaki regions which would help inform appropriate controls and responses.

After consideration and discussion of the Health and Safety Report, it was moved that

Council to receive staff report on Health and Safety for May and June 2025

Terry Inglis/Kieran Bell

Carried

Robert Sowman left the meeting at 4:30pm

B. Proactive Actions for Health and Safety and Wellbeing –Tracking Personnel in Remote Field Situations

Mr Teal provided an overview of some cost-effective options to track personnel in remote field situations. He presented a draft policy *Personal Tracking Device Policy for Health and Safety Use*, and *Remote Field Work Monitoring and Reporting Policy* which are intended to provide for pragmatic and practical procedures to manage personnel in the field and as lone workers – promoting the easy implementation of the policy, and protecting the privacy of staff (with the primary/sole purpose being for health and safety).

After discussion it was moved that

Council adopt the Health and Safety and Wellbeing policies - Personal Tracking Device Policy for Health and Safety Use, and Remote Field Work Monitoring and Reporting Policy

Paul Dewar/Jim Cook

Carried

C. Health and Safety Act Review

The review of the Health and Safety Act is being undertaken by Government to clarify the different responsibilities and liabilities of governors (Board) and

management, and also to clarify the responsibilities and liabilities of landowners for recreational users on their property.

15. Species Management

A. Draft Anglers Notice

Mr Teal confirmed that the changes recommended to the Anglers Notice had been approved by the Minister. This included a change in the wording for regulations at Hokowhitu Lagoon, Palmerston North only state the limit for brown or rainbow trout – and that this limit be amended to be the same as for Manawatu River

B. Report on Upper Rangitikei Trout Fishery Management 2025

A project report on work undertaken in the Upper Rangitikei River catchment for the 2024/2025 Financial Year – discussion deferred until later in the meeting,

C. Report on GW Controlled River Fisheries 2025—Otaki, Hutt, and Waikanae rivers

A project report on work undertaken in the GW Controlled River Fisheries 2025 for the 2024/2025 Financial Year - discussion deferred until later in the meeting,

D. Research

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of a report prepared by Dr Adam Canning on mapping suitable trout spawning habitat using modelling predictions and empirical data to verify the model.

16. Habitat Advocacy and Management

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of activity for Habitat Advocacy:

A. Regional Planning advocacy

Horizons Regional Council have effectively paused work on the next generation of Regional Plan with the timetable for public notification indicated as end of September 2027.

No further progress of the Environment Court case for Plan Change 2 of One Plan (Horizons Regional Council's Regional Plan) with the focus on if, or how, an additional tool – Nitrogen Loss Risk Scorecard – can be integrated into the planning processes to deal with nitrogen leaching from intensive farm use.

Proposed Plan Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan (PC1) is currently paused effective from 26 June 2025. The plan change process will resume when there is greater certainty on the direction of the amended National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.

B. Resource Consent advocacy

Mr Teal noted that the Territorial Local Authorities within the Horizons and Greater Wellington regions' boundaries have been considering collective management approaches to collaborative municipal water management – and provided an updated list of resolved collaborations.

C. Habitat Enhancement Projects

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the advice a support of applications to Game Bird Habitat Trust – staff to act as referee where appropriate.

17. Participation

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of activity for participation function and licence holder communications and engagement:

A. Information to Clients

- 2025/2026 Fish Season Magazine articles prepared
- E-Newsletter – weekly Hunting Season updates

B. Licence Holder Engagement

Mr Teal provided an overview of the completion of the access project to Kourarau Dam – which was a collaboration between Trust House, Carterton DC, and Fish and Game – with Hamish Carnachan leading the project liaison for Fish and Game.

Mr Pansters left the meeting at 4:45pm

18. Public Awareness/Communications

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of recent activity related to the public awareness and communications function.

A. Iwi Engagement

Mr Teal confirmed he had attended early discussions on potential involvement in the Porirua Harbour Accord – at Ngati Toa's request.

B. Communication

Mr Teal noted communications were mainly related to licence holders as required.

C. Promotions

Mr Teal acknowledged the contribution made by Councillor McGregor and Hamish Carnachan in assisting with the logistical organisation of the

Parliamentary Hunt on the shores of Lake Wairarapa – with Ministers Nicole McKee and Minister James Meager participating.

Mr Teal also acknowledged the contribution of Councillors Dewar, Brown, and Cook in assisting organisers and staff in the ‘Fishing for Farmers’ event held near Pahiatua.

D. Public Awareness

Mr Teal acknowledged the contributions to early season press releases. He also noted that there was the normal updating of media outlets on opening weekend regarding hunter satisfaction and identifying any issues arising from compliance checks.

19. Licence Sales and Licence Management System

A. Fish Licence Sales Update – until 30 June 2025

Mr Teal provided a brief summary of fish licence sales for the 2024/2025 Fishing Season up until the end of June 2025:

- LEQ sales down compared to previous year by 4.4% (2,868 c.f. 3,002)
- Total Number of Sales of licences similar to previous year (5,616 c.f. 5,574)
- Nationally licence sales value LEQ is similar to previous year (72,262 c.f. 72,182).

After brief discussion it was moved that

Council receive Licence Sales Report for 2024/2025 Fishing Season YTD (up to 30 June 2025) and 2025 Game Season YTD (up to 30 June 2025)

Jim Cook/Kieran Bell

Carried

B. Game Licence Sales Update – until 30 June 2025

Mr Teal provided a brief summary of the Game licence sales for the 2025 Game Season up until 30 June 2025.

- LEQ sales similar to previous year (3,207 c.f. 3,233)
- Total Number of Sales of licences similar to previous year (3,740 c.f. 3,799)
- Nationally licence sales value LEQ is down 1.3% (30,506 c.f. 30,913).

After brief discussion it was moved that

Council receive Licence Sales Report for 2025 Game Season YTD (up to 30 June 2025)

Ben Hancock/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

C. Licence Management System – May and June 2025

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the Licencing Management System Monthly Performance Reports for May 2025 and June 2025 noting that the provider was performing well with no issues of continuity of service.

It was then moved

Council receives the update report for May and June 2025 for performance of provider of services to manage the licensing platform and database management.

Andrew McGregor/Ben Hancock

Carried

D. Licence Price Optimisation Research

Chairman Dewar referred to the Licence Price Optimisation Research report presented to NZ Council – attached to agenda. Discussion ensued on the findings of the research regarding price sensitivity of various categories. Council questioned how this would then inform the review of the licence pricing strategy and consideration of inclusion/removal of licence categories. It was agreed to send a letter to NZ Council asking what the next stage would be in using this information to inform pricing – and requesting the original briefs of the research that was used by the provider to define their brief.

There was brief discussion on the licence commission rate with discussion deferred until total costs of sales and benefits of agent contribution could be put into context. It was confirmed that Taupo DOC Fishing licence sales are now only available on-line, with agents only acting as a conduit for on-line access if required.

20. Operational Summary 1 May 2025 to 30 June 2025

After discussion and clarification it was moved

Council to receive the staff report on Operational Summary for May 2025 and June 2025.

Jim Cook/Kieran Bell

Carried

21. Financial Statements to 30 June 2025 and Financial Transactions for May and June 2025

After discussion it was moved that

Council receive Financial Statements for Year-to-Date for the 2024/2025 Financial Year –Income Statement up to end June 2025 and Financial Transactions for May and June 2025.

Terry Inglis/Steve Brown

Carried

Mr Teal confirmed that he was still looking at options for leasing alternative office premises.

Discussion ensued on a replacement vehicle with a view to replacing one in August and potentially another by the end of the calendar year. Quotes were obtained using the All of Government procurement process.

It was then moved that

Replacement of vehicle (4WD Ford Ranger) be approved at up to \$49,000 plus canopy costs

Terry Inglis/Kieran Bell

Carried

The existing vehicle being replaced will be sold through Turners Vehicle Auction {estimates of \$15k-\$20k

Mr Teal confirmed that the main photocopier/printer had been replaced as previously authorised capital asset replacement expenditure.

Mr Teal confirmed that he had requested an IT provider to conduct an audit of the inventory of computers given that an upgrade to Windows11 was imminent. All laptops were over five years old—and two are not suitable for upgrade from Windows10 to Windows11 operating system. The Server is over ten years old and while it hasn't caused any issues it is seen as old technology - increasing the risk of critical hardware failure. Mr Teal requested to use asset replacement reserves to progressively replace the ageing technology stocks.

It was then moved that

Mr Teal be authorised to progressively upgrade current computer equipment with 'like for like' capabilities (or alternatives as required).

Jennifer Yanko/Jim Cook

Carried

22. Correspondence

There were no additional specific items of correspondence that had not already been addressed in the meeting.

Dr Kavermann returned to the meeting at 5.20pm

23. Recognition Awards

Councillors were requested to bring forward names of those contributors to the management or governance of the fish and game resource that were worthy of specific recognition.

Mr Teal presented Councillor McGregor a wooden platter on behalf of NZ Council for his efforts and contributions on helping the Ministers during the Parliamentary Hunt [acclamation].

15. Species Management (Resumed from previously in meeting)

B. Report on Upper Rangitikei Trout Fishery Management 2025

A project report was presented on work undertaken in the Upper Rangitikei River catchment for the 2024/2025 Financial Year. Dr Kavermann provided a brief overview of the activities and results – concluding that the Moawhanga catchment drift dives indicating similar to good results, high numbers in the mid sections of the Rangitikei River, and the Upper Rangitikei River dive to be conducted in 2026 as part of the triennial drift dive programme. It was noted by Councillor Bell that numbers from his observations of fish numbers on the Moawhanga river/near the Paharakeke Stream had been severely affected by flows resulting from Cyclone Gabrielle but there had been some recovery.

After discussion and further clarification, it was moved to

Receive the Project Report 1112 Report on Upper Rangitikei Trout Fishery Management 2025

Jim Cook/Kieran Bell

Carried

C. Report on GW Controlled River Fisheries 2025—Otaki, Hutt, and Waikanae rivers

A project report was presented on work undertaken in the GW Controlled River Fisheries 2025 for the 2024/2025 Financial Year. Dr Kavermann provided an overview of the Hutt River drift dives undertaken in February with an increasing trend (and also July as part of the RiverLink monitoring requirements) – concluding that numbers are up across all three catchments – Hutt, Waikanae, Otaki rivers – since Cyclone Gabrielle.

Dr Kavermann noted that he was currently seeking an update to the monitoring agreement (and service fee) with GW Delivery Group who have been using the information for consideration for the past 25 years.

After discussion and further clarification, it was moved to

Receive the Project Report 1113 Report on TeAwa Kairangi/Hutt, Waikanae, and Otaki Rivers Trout Fishery Monitoring 2025

Jim Cook/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

24. Conservation Board Liaison

Discussion ensued on the potential discussion points that could be a focus for attendance at the next Conservation Board meeting scheduled.

It was confirmed that Jim Cook had not yet be been advised of the appointments to the Wellington Conservation Board.

25. General Business

There was one specific items of general business noted before or during the meeting that were required to be addressed.

Mr Teal provided an overview of a request for feedback by the Game Preserve operator at Martinborough (Lagoon Hill) to operate an organised hunt in April. The Game Preserve is operating under Schedule 3 classification (subject to Ministerial approval and overseen by DOC) but has operated in line with the open game season. The operator has found operating in July in wet conditions logistically difficult but wanted to shift the organised hunts to start in April rather than May to ensure the financial viability of the operation. The operator is seeking Fish and Game's views on the variation in operation to inform DoC of consultation but does not need Fish and Game formal permissions per se.

Council considered whether it supports the proposed April hunt or whether from an ethical perspective that the current restriction of aligning with open seasons was appropriate. Council concluded that there were no issues from a population health point of view, and perceptions from hunters did not appear to be a concern as it had been 20 years ago.

It was then moved that

The Game Preserve Operator at Lagoon Hill, Martinborough be informed that Wellington Fish and Game Council does not have an issue with the operations commencing hunts in April for 2026.

Steve Brown/Jim Cook

Carried

Councillor McGregor sought clarification regarding a query he had had on the process for releasing captive reared mallards – with a key contemporary consideration being risks of promulgating diseases such as avian influenzas in uncontrolled or unmonitored arrangements – even if released locally on farms.

There were no further specific items of general business, the meeting closed at 5.45pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Tuesday, 14 October 2025 at Nga Manu Nature Reserve Complex, 74 Nga Manu Reserve Road, Waikanae at 3.00pm.

Chairman  Date _____