

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 27 MAY 2025 AT 3.00PM AT DISTINCTION HOTEL COACHMAN, 140 FITZHERBERT AVE, PALMERSTON NORTH.

1. **Present:**

Chairman Paul Dewar, Councillors Jim Cook, Terry Inglis, Jennifer Yanko, Aaron Passey, Prof. Stephen Haslett, Ben Hancock, Kieran Bell.

In Attendance:

Fish and Game Staff: Phil Teal, Dr Matt Kavermann, Paul Browne

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, Steve Brown, Andrew McGregor, Richard McIntyre.

Staff: Hamish Carnachan, Ami Coughlan

It was then moved that

the apologies received be accepted

Aaron Passey/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

3. **Conflict of Interest**

The Conflicts of Interest Register was discussed.

Councillor Passey noted that there were some changes within his governance role for Federated Farmers – Tararua Province:

- His current role of Chair of Dairy Section – Tararua Province Federated Farmers would be relinquished on 4 July 2025.
- He is now Vice-President Tararua Province Federated Farmers but until 4 July 2025.
- He would be the President Tararua Province Federated Farmers from 4 July 2025.

It was moved that

The amendment to the Conflict of Interest Register be made reflecting Councillor Passey's new role as President of Tararua Province for Federated Farmers (from 4 July 2025)

Ben Hancock/Kieran Bell

Carried

Chair with no additional items identified and therefore no amendments were required to the register and no specific items that needed 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 remain unaltered.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting of 11 March 2025**

Following consideration of the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish and Game Council of 11 March 2025 it was moved that
the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 11 March 2025 be approved and confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Jim Cook/Aaron Passey

Carried

5. **Matters Arising:**

Mr Teal referred to the Action List resulting from the 11 March 2025 meeting, noting actions progressed relating to the following items:

- the draft budget was presented to NZ Council as part of the budgeting process (in the previous year's style template format)
- A letter had been drafted to Corina Jordan acknowledging her contributions to Fish and Game following her resignation from the NZ Council's CE role
- Allocated some staff resources to scoping out issues to support the NZ Council co-ordinated Access Campaign.
- Wider consultation process to be undertaken regarding the simplification of fishing regulations – with the intent to consult all angling clubs in the region regarding the principles and implications.
- Confirmed that while sending correspondence to NZC Chair seeking specific examples of inferred negative behaviour towards the previous NZC CE would not necessarily resolve any issues, it would signal that this behaviour is not condoned and might increase awareness of what actions occurred.

It was then moved that

A letter be sent to NZ Council Chair from Wellington Council Chair seeking clarification of what he referred to in an email on 10 March 2025 to all Fish and Game governors that negative behaviour from some governors and management towards the previous Chief Executive may have contributed to her resignation

Jim Cook/Aaron Passey

Carried

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 11 and 12 April 2025.

He confirmed that there was another meeting planned for the end of June 2025 where it was anticipated that the proposed legislative changes would be outlined by the Minister for Hunting and Fishing (planned attendance). The date of the NZ Council meeting had originally been planned for earlier in June but it was considered prudent to provide more time for consideration of the consultation on organisational budgets.

Councillor Haslett clarified that NZ Council had appointed Richard Cosgrove as Acting Chief Executive in May on an interim basis – with a view to confirming an appointment within six months.

Councillor Haslett provided an overview of the budget discussions and that it was recognised that operating out of general reserves was not sustainable.

He assumed that the Minister for Hunting and Fishing would approve the recommended licence fee increases or else it would revert to last year's budget.

The proposed licence fee to be recommended to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing for approval were:

- 2025/2026 Adult whole season sports fish licence of \$161 (**increase of \$5**)
- Adult whole season game licence increase of \$120 (**increase of \$4**) (incl. gamebird habitat stamp and GST)
- 2025/2026 non-resident whole season fishing licence of \$300 (**increase of \$30**)
- Licence categories be charged at the agreed ratio for all categories.

Councillor Haslett noted provisional approval for a dedicated research position and, as co-chair of the Research Sub-Committee with Dr Mike Barker, emphasised the need for more structure around the research function. He also confirmed the annual research budget had been reduced to \$50,000. Councillor Hancock sought clarification about the key drivers for defining research priorities. Councillor Haslett stated that three proposals were currently before the Sub-Committee, though they may not align with the organisation's current research priorities. Mr Teal confirmed that an environmental research scan had been conducted five years ago that identified four topics that were proactively progressed and

completed, but no broader consultation on research needs has occurred since. Councillor Haslett noted that in the absence of a dedicated research role, governors were becoming involved in operational and oversight tasks. Councillor Passey questioned how research proposals aligned with the overall strategy; it was acknowledged they should, but the current process lacks clear linkages to ensure strategic alignment.

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 11 and 12 April 2025 be received

Kieran Bell/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

7. Public Forum

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

Paul Browne briefly outlined the work and upgrades undertaken at Kilmore Lodge on the shores of Lake Wairarapa including sink, curtains, and bench chairs. He also noted that he had liaised (on behalf of the farm manager) with some owners of huts on Wairio Block as the new farm manager was seeking to proactively tidy up potential risks and hazards on the farm.

Mr Browne requested consideration of a Senior Game Licence – akin to the principles for establishing a licence category for senior anglers.

8. Regional Governance – Chairman's Report

Chairman Dewar provided a brief overview on regional governance matters.

1. Chairman's Report for Previous Period

There were no specific significant issues that needed to be highlighted that were relevant to governance functions but provided an overview of key operational outcomes where appropriate.

Chairman Dewar confirmed that he had presented the Wellington region's budget proposal to the NZ Council during their budget deliberations, noting that only minor clarifications were required. He observed that the process required Chairs to answer specific budget-related questions that often needed further studied clarification. He felt the questions were aimed at eliciting personal opinions from Chairs and suggested that a formal list of clarifications be developed for the Council

to address collectively. This, he noted, highlighted the need for improvements in the budgeting process.

It was agreed that there was urgency for the NZ Council to define the new budgeting process and associated policy to provide clarity, transparency and certainty of requirements and decision-making criteria.

It had been confirmed that the Minister for Hunting and Fishing was currently in the process of presenting the proposals for legislative changes to Cabinet in order to get this on the legislative agenda. It had been indicated that there will be some significant changes proposed to improve the Fish and Game system, but needs to be politically positive (or potentially neutral).

After brief further discussion it was moved

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

Jim Cook/Ben Hancock

Carried

9. Inter-regional Business - Governance

A. Regional Chairs' Forum Update

Chairman Dewar provided an overview of the one video conferencing meeting held in March 2025 which covered the following key discussion topics:

- Chairman of NZ Council – updated Chairs on the progress of replacing the NZC Chief Executive
- Confirmed that NZ Council had contracted (short term) an accountant to complete the annual reporting requirements and undertake accounting responsibilities.
- The Minister for Hunting and Fishing had indicated that he had been working through the responses from all regions on the proposed legislative changes following meeting with all regions (in-person or videoconference).
- Information was provided on how the budget presentations would be conducted with NZ Council.
- It was confirmed that one Fish and Game region was trying to establish an MOU for interactions with local provincial Federated Farmers
- There was a potential issue noted as to how governors used social media communications (based on recent Southland Fish and Game issues and other more historic examples) \.

It was then moved that

An update to the Communications Policy should be made to specifically address governors' use of social media, in line with what is already in place for staff.

Paul Dewar/Jim Cook

Carried

It was agreed that Wellington Council should encourage all Councils do likewise in developing policy for social media use by governors and staff - in order to protect the wider organisation's reputation.

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 – 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.

Aaron Passey/Jim Cook

Carried

10. Draft Annual Budget and Project Plan

A. Consultation on draft Recommendation of Licence Fee(s) to Minister for Hunting and Fishing - Wellington Fish and Game Council

Wellington Fish and Game Council considered the paper Licence Fee Recommendation 2025-2026 by Corina Jordan NZ Council CE dated 24 April 2025. This paper summarised the following recommendation by NZ Council:

The proposed licence fee to be recommended to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing for approval were:

- 2025/2026 Adult whole season sports fish licence of \$161 (**increase of \$5**)
- Adult whole season game licence increase of \$120 (**increase of \$4**) (incl. gamebird habitat stamp and GST)
- 2025/2026 non-resident whole season fishing licence of \$300 (**increase of \$30**)
- Licence categories be charged at the agreed ratio for all categories.

It was confirmed that any increases in day licences would be in accord with the current LEQ ratio for each category, and no change to the Designated Water Licence fee proposed.

Councillors considered the draft recommendations and provided the following feedback:

- The increased licence fee recommendation is near to inflation.
- Support work on determining if price sensitivity will affect some licence categories.
- Wellington Council supports the recommended licence fees recommended by NZ Council.

It was then moved that

Feedback be provided by Wellington Council to NZ Council that supports the recommendation for licence fees for 2025-2026 with additional comments that warrant emphasis

Aaron Passey/Jim Cook

Carried

B. Family Fishing Licence - Proposal to Amend

Wellington Fish and Game Council considered the paper ***Supporting Women Anglers – Modernising the Family Licence*** prepared by Maggie Tait, Principal Communications Advisor, NZ dated for NZ Council meeting #174 - 11 and 12 April 2025.

Mr Teal provided some background on the reasons that NZ Council was seeking feedback on a proposal to amend the eligibility for use of all named participants on the Family Fishing Licence – which would remove restrictions for use by the secondary licence holder and junior/child licence holders.

Council discussed the original purpose of the Family Licence – with it concluded that it was to get more sustained angler participation with a view to mentoring children by adults to introduce them to the pursuit. It was also intended to involve partners in the pursuit and to provide for continued stable participation by involving a wider ‘family’ grouping.

It was concluded that originally the concept was for the ‘mentoring’ benefits of having a Family Licence rather than having a separate licence so that each person could use it independently – and not at the same time in different localities. The way the rules were developed for using a Family Licence meant that an adult (primary or secondary) could give assistance to a child but not have two separate fishing parties at different localities.

Council considered the current implementation of the Family Licence as to who can and can’t fish independently as overly complex, confusing, and uncertain in terms of still achieving the desired outcomes.

- **General Support Expressed for Amendment:** Council concluded that the concept of two independent (and equal) adult whole season licence holders on the Family Licence was seen as positive.

There was acknowledgement that there were several different family configurations including 'mixed' families and grandparent mentors.

Changing the Family Licence configuration partially addresses concerns of discrimination, opens up voter eligibility, and potentially increases the diversity of anglers and hunters who can support the work of Fish and Game.

Wellington Council concluded by supporting in principle the amendments that allow for two adults to be considered on the Family Licence to be able to fish independently or together at the same location and time – but not independently at different locations at the same time. Council considered that both adults listed on a Family Licence should be eligible to vote.

Council considered that it would be preferable that all children that are able to use the Family Fishing licence should be named – and that potentially material could be targeted at family groups for promotion.

It was then moved that

Wellington Fish and Game Council would support amended conditions to the Family Licence that allow for two people to be listed as (whole season) licence holders and children listed to enable fishing together or separately but not independently at different locations.

Kieran Bell/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

- **Clarification Required in Regulations - and For Practical Use:**

Wellington Council considered that the purpose and expected outcome of the Family Licence category needed to be clearly defined to enable it to be assessed for effectiveness.

Any regulations relating to the use of a Family Licence need to be very clear in regulation to enable compliance (and ensure it is able to be enforced) and also to make it less complex for anglers to understand when/how they can use the licence.

There needs to be a supporting education programme to provide awareness to anglers using this licence to clearly define its purpose and how it can be used.

It was moved that

In the feedback provided to NZ Council on this subject that:

- *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*

Aaron Passey/Steve Haslett

Carried

- **Pricing:** Council noted that the appropriate pricing of the licence is an important consideration. The pricing mechanism and price differential of a Family Licence compared to an Adult Whole Season licence should be undertaken objectively. Council considered the some of the suggested pricing strategies but considered that this needs an objective approach.
- **Licence Price Optimisation Project:** The changes to the Family Licence category should be tested in the Licence Price Optimisation Project to assist in pricing and price sensitivity assessments. This should ideally be completed and have this information available before making a final decision on its implementation.
- **Checking Potential Financial Implications are Within Expectation:** Council concluded that while it would support in principle of reforming the configuration of the Family Licence – but it is important that any discounting does not cannibalise total sales of an Adult Whole Season licence sales.

Council expressed caution that any change in Family Licence configuration should not materially cannibalise the adult whole season licence sales. They considered that the Licence Category sales and switching behaviour analysis should be undertaken at Year 1 (and also Year 3 if continued in format) to ensure that an unexpected result has not occurred.

In addition, Council considered that when reviewing the effectiveness of the licence category there should be an option of removing the Family Licence option if it doesn't meet the objective.

Wellington Council concluded by supporting in principle of reforming the configuration of the Family Licence – but it is important that any discounting does not cannibalise total sales of an Adult Whole Season licence sales.

It was moved that

In the feedback provided to NZ Council on this subject that NZ Council be asked to clarify:

- *the objectively based 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.*

Aaron Passey/Ben Hancock

Carried

- **Servicing the Family Licence Holder(s):** It was agreed that only one physical licence should be issued – acknowledging that this may become redundant if a digital licence format is pursued.

Council acknowledged the risk of a Family Licence being exploited by parties that are not fully eligible for discounting would be disappointing but it is noted as an uncertain risk.

Council expressed a preference that 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.

C. Comment on 2025 2026 Licence Sales Forecast

Wellington Fish and Game Council also considered the paper 2025 2026 Licence Forecast prepared by Kate Thompson dated for NZ Council meeting 11 and 12 April 2025. Mr Teal provided a brief explanation of how the forecast figures are derived: using the previous year's licence sales and the current year's estimate as the basis for forecasting the following year's licence sales. Council was satisfied that this provides a logical way for predicting licence sales in the following year and acknowledged that the forecast estimates were in line with expectation of a stable sales pattern.

It was then moved that

Wellington Council provide feedback to NZ Council indicating that it was satisfied with the process for forecasting licence sales and acknowledge that forecast estimates were in line with expectation of a stable sales pattern

Jennifer Yanko/Jim Cook

Carried

11. 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. He outlined that there had been various actions to increase awareness within Regional Councils who have been targeted as implementing a response when HPAI H5N1 reaches mainland New Zealand.

12. Policy and Legislation

a. Arms Act Review

There were some changes to Part 6 of the Arms Act relating to the controls placed on shooting clubs and shooting ranges in 2020. The Arms (Shooting Clubs, Shooting Ranges, and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2025 introduced is intended to simplify the regulatory requirements on shooting clubs and ranges by reducing the regulatory burden, while maintaining public safety requirements.

Minister McKee had indicated insufficient support in Cabinet to progress a comprehensive review of the firearms registry –invoking an “agree to disagree” clause in the Government’s coalition agreement.

It was confirmed that the submission on the Arms Act Review submitted by Wellington Fish and Game Council on 28 February 2025 would be considered in the wider Arms Act review anticipated to progress by the end of the 2025 calendar year.

b. Wildlife Act Review

Department of Conservation Officials have confirmed that there is an active review of the Wildlife Act but there has been no clarification on the timetable or priorities for progression.

c. Resource Management Act Review

The Government has announced 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. These changes aim to create a clearer, more consistent framework, supported by a single set of national guidelines to help councils implement the laws efficiently and resolve competing priorities. The reforms also aim to reduce the need for consents by expanding permitted activities, alongside increased compliance monitoring.

d. 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.

e. Organisational Policies

NZ Council is currently consulting on the following policies:

- Draft HR Policy – Health and Safety
- Draft HR Policy – Lone Worker Support
- Draft Operational Policy – Resource Management and Legislation.

DRAFT HR POLICY – HEALTH AND SAFETY

Council considered the draft Health and Safety Policy prepared by NZ Council (prepared by Adrienne Murray HR Advisor NZC – undated) for consultation with regions.

After discussion Wellington Council agreed to provide NZ Council with the following feedback:

- Council considered that the Health and Safety Policy needs to provide a **framework** by which regional Fish and Game Councils can review their Health and Safety and Wellbeing policies.
- Council considered that there needed to be general statements in the policy that confirm the commitment to health and safety and wellbeing to support a positive safety culture.
- There needs to be clarity as to whether this is national policy or NZ Council policy – and if the former then it needs to provide an overview of how the organisation interacts, and also confirm a mechanism for auditing development and implementation of health and safety policy. This will help define responsibilities for each PCBU.
- Council considered that there needed to be clarification of the role and scope of responsibilities of each PCBU:
 1. NZ Council is responsible for:
 - a. its own operations,
 - b. co-ordination of limited number of activities common to all Fish and Game regions (such as NZ Council co-ordinating boating safety in dealing with Maritime Safety NZ as a collective, and co-ordination of honorary ranger compliance activity.
 - c. co-ordination function in assisting regions to develop consistent and fit-for-purpose Health and Safety and Wellbeing policy (i.e. it can provide a positive influence on health and safety culture), and

- d. potentially providing an audit function to confirm regional policy development and implementation of processes has been undertaken.
2. Regional Fish and Game Councils are responsible for:
- a. their own operations – and develop their own Health and Safety policy,
 - b. development of their own risk register,
 - c. development of appropriate health and safety plans in response to the risk register, and
 - d. recording and auditing processes.
- Council considered that focus for the organisational policy – as presented in draft – should provide an overview of the organisational approach – in order to give structure of a framework to be able to develop consistent health and safety policy and implementation for each separate entity as a PCBU. Each regional Fish and Game Council has unique risk factors (or at least emphasis) as individual PCBU that they develop individual fit for purpose responses – acknowledging that many risk factors will be similar.
 - Council discussed the appropriate contents of an overarching policy which could potentially provide guidance on process – which are a legislative requirement anyway.

For example -

- risk assessment register: technical guidance as appendices .
- template Health and Safety plans – which may have commonality and consistency rather than SOPs which are not adaptable.
- Record Keeping templates/software that are fit for purpose
- Reviewing frequency – to ensure fit for purpose technology and that it is up-to-date - such as tracking field worker safety (including notifications for overdue status).

Council supported the use of templates of Health and Safety and Wellbeing Plans which can be slightly adapted to specific circumstances. There could be additional guidance provided on 'wellbeing' as contemporary Health and Safety Plans are giving this aspect additional emphasis. Council discussed having a structure to the overarching policy to ensure relevant topics are referred to.

Council considered the review periods need to be clearly stated for Health and Safety Plans to ensure that they are still efficient (e.g. technological advances such as satellite texting on cell provider networks).

DRAFT HR POLICY – LONE WORKER SUPPORT

Wellington Council considered the draft Lone Worker Support Policy prepared by NZ Council (prepared by Adrienne Murray HR Advisor NZC – February 2025) for consultation with regions.

Wellington Council agreed to provide the following feedback to NZ Council:

- There needs to be clarity as to whether this is national policy, a national template for each PCBU to use, or NZ Council policy.
- The draft policy refers to Fish and Game New Zealand which is a generic brand name – which doesn't identify individual PCBUs – which it should specify.
- There are already systems provided with the Health and Safety Plans in response to the Risk Management Register.
- It should be clarified as to whether this policy is required to be included as part of a section for operational health and safety (i.e. chapter) or a requirement as a stand-alone policy that is required for clarity under legislation.
- This appears to be uplifted from a large organisation as a control measure requirement listed is there "must include: detailed SOP for the nature of the work."
- External advice has been to focus on 'critical risk' activities that can cause death or severe injury – so have a SOP for each activity a lone worker undertakes is resource hungry without affecting safety outcomes.
- There is no delineation provided for remote workers vs lone workers – both working on their own. Those working from home – in another location (town) – are not clearly addressed here. There is a continuum of lone worker low risk → lone worker moderate risk → remote worker → lone worker high risk. Each should be addressed differently as the manifestation of issues arise differently – including wellbeing versus physical accident.
- Council considered the merits of being overly prescriptive in actions and reliance on SOPs, which is often resource-hungry approach to developing documentation and these are not always readily adopted by staff. If the safety and wellbeing culture is right in the first instance, then overly prescriptive requirements appear excessive – e.g. contacting someone every two days if a remote worker should not be listed as a requirement per se, but be undertaken as good practice.
- Council acknowledges that much of the activity undertaken by staff will fall under a lone worker definition – and will incorporate whatever requirements are necessary to promote a positive health and safety and wellbeing working environment.

DRAFT OPERATIONAL POLICY – RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND LEGISLATION.

Wellington Fish and Game Council considered the draft Resource Management and Legislation Policy prepared by NZ Council (prepared by Helen Brosnan – 28 February 2025) for consultation with regions.

Council agreed to provide the following feedback to NZ Council:

- It was considered that the matrix tries to give an objective assessment (number) to a subjective set of criteria. Council considered that the matrix table approach as presented requires more work and revision - and needs to be developed into more of a drafting process into a triage of significance,
- Councillors acknowledged the possibility of using this as a less precise 'drafting process' but highlighted instances where a waterbody, despite being of low local importance, could set a significant precedent, potentially leading to its exclusion from funding considerations.
- A drafting process could be refined to identify levels of significance – which will inform what approach is likely to be taken.
- There should be direction/guidance provided on what Fish and Game does if Court cases are not pursued – from initial submission, Hearing Stage, post-Hearing Stage (does this preclude being a s274 interested party?)
- It seems obvious that **Legislation** considerations would be priority funded if fundamental outcomes are a result – with legal, technical, and planning expertise funded. It is acknowledged that the main legal fund managed by NZ Council was initially a Regional Legal Fund but this has transformed into a more general RM Fund.
- NZ Council needs to consider an RM Advocacy Strategy that incorporates all aspects of advocacy – including local level advocacy in liaison groups, local consenting processes, regional planning processes, higher Court legal case processes, and public awareness campaigns.
- Council recognised that there are often strict time limits for making decisions on whether to proceed with higher court actions. It is essential to have a process that either provides an early indication of support during regional planning process initially or ensures that funding decisions are made swiftly and thoroughly critiqued.
- Council recognised that the applications for funding are sporadic and do not conform to presenting themselves within Fish and Game's budgetary timetable. Council question whether NZ Council was prepared to allow accumulation of funds in the RM budget/reserve to use when two or more significant cases present themselves.

- Council noted that legal cases develop over time – and can be over an extended period of five or more years and during this time political and legal environments can change over that period.
- There is the prospect that proposed Natural Environment Act might provide central and consistent direction requiring Regional Councils to implement those policies and rules (i.e. the prospect of removing individual Regional Plans). This would change the current regional planning processes to provide consistency but also focus Fish and Game’s efforts at the legislative level where the approach and rules would be defined.
- The Resource Management and Legislation Policy needs to be regular reviewed – as the current legal and regulatory framework is currently very dynamic – and there may be different approaches required once legislation changes come into effect.
- This policy could provide direction on how Fish and Game manages higher Court cases – and whether there is a small team managing cases to get economies of learning – e.g. a team co-ordinated by NZ Council and supported by regional staff who have expertise and/or overseen by project managers from NZ Council. This would also provide a direct reporting line to NZ Council on any legal case – and remove the perception that regions are independently taking legal action out of scope of NZ Council policy.
- Council considered it would be useful to provide examples of what legal cases that Fish and Game are likely to fund in the future, and provide advice on what alternative courses of action would occur for all other cases/processes – including using public awareness campaigns as an alternative to pursuing legal cases.
- Council considered that consideration needs to be given by NZ Council as to the realistic number of cases that Fish and Game can actively sustain and be involved in.
- The policy should provide the provision for potential cases of local importance to be funded by regional reserves
- Wellington Council consider the draft policy as presented needed to be modified and clarified before fully supporting this approach.

13. Health and Safety Report

a. Health and Safety Report for March and April 2025

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the Health and Safety report for March and April 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.

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

Council to receive staff report on Health and Safety for March and April 2025

Jim Cook/Terry Inglis

Carried

b. Proactive Actions for Health and Safety – Proposal to Subsidise Skin Checks for Field Staff

Mr Teal outlined previous initiatives to provide staff with skin health checks using a single provider in New Zealand, but this was not progressed. He identified the risk of skin cancer for field staff as moderately high. He considered the most appropriate approach would be to provide a modest subsidy for skin checks by a reputable provider but for individual staff be able to choose the health provider of their choice. The recommendation was to provide a moderate subsidy to staff of \$100 for annual checks for potential melanoma – payable on receiving receipt of services.

After further discussion it was moved that

A moderate subsidy of up to \$100 be available for staff to check for potential occurrence of melanoma (or specialist) – payable on receipt of services

Jennifer Yanko/Aaron Passey

Carried

14. Species Management

A. Draft Anglers Notice

Dr Kavermann provided an overview of the recommendations for changes to the Anglers' Notice for 2025/2026. He noted that from the trout surveys across 49 reaches with 18 rivers totaling 67.5 kilometres during summer of 2025 the results were similar to last season so there was no compelling reasons to make significant changes.

Dr Kavermann highlighted a possible change to the put and take trout fishery in Hokowhitu Lagoon, Palmerston North – to amend wording to be consistent with the regulations relating to specifically noting other sports fish limits – which become the default 'no limit'. After discussion it was agreed that the limit for trout in the lagoon should be the same as the limit in the wider Manawatu River catchment.

It was then moved that

The recommendations to change 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

Jim Cook/Terry Inglis

Carried

B. Research

Council briefly discussed the range of research projects undertaken by NZ Fish and Game in the report “Research and Monitoring Programme Update prepared by Helen Brosnan, Senior Policy Advisor, NZ Council dated for the NZ Council meeting of 11 and 12 April 2025.

Council requested that all research reports be posted on the Fish and Game website. Council also requested that some projects such as \$25,000 scholarships for Cawthron Institute collaborations require reports to be submitted and posted on the website.

15. Habitat Advocacy and Management

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

A. Regional Planning advocacy

Horizons Regional Council have essentially 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.

Hearings attended for GWRC Natural Resources Plan (Regional Plan) PC1 Hearing Stream Two – dealing with sedimentation and water quality issues.

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.

C. Habitat Enhancement Projects

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

16. Participation

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

A. Information to Clients

- Assisted in pre-game season licence purchase e mail communications.
- 2025 Game Season Magazine distributed in March.
- Regional Newsletter – Pre Season hunting newsletter produced and distributed.
- E-Newsletter – weekly Hunting Season updates
- E-Newsletter – weekly Fishing Update – NI Lowdown – sent out until early April.

B. Licence Holder Engagement

- Engaged with fishing licence holders from the previous season who had not yet purchased a licence this season – between Easter and ANZAC day in April.
- NZ Council was seeking feedback from regions to support initiatives that encourage participation of women in freshwater angling - including educational material, development of networking platforms, and potential resources to support a media campaigns.

17. 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 that Fish and Game staff presented at the Wairarapa Moana Statutory Reserve Board in March 2025 outlining Fish and Game's legislative mandate and organisational strategic outcomes. The Statutory Board engaged in discussions relating to management of introduced fish species in the lake that align with the Board's vision. The importance of traditional recreation waterfowl hunting and continued access to the resource was highlighted – as well as some specific issues relating to management of black swan population numbers were also discussed at the meeting.

B. Public Awareness

Mr Teal confirmed that there had been specific pre-Game Season press releases specific to Wellington region. 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.

Council briefly discussed several recent media items in rural media (as part of media syndication) including Fish and Game's responses:

- The Minister for Hunting and Fishing's commentary on dealing with perceived issues of dealing with game bird aggregations on crops.
- A rural affairs commentator on Fish and Game's compliance activities and game bird management in the Wairarapa district – with a response by Wellington Fish and Game Council's Chairman.
- A commentary by a farming industry advocate on management of waterfowl and potential effects on crops and water quality – with a response by NZ Fish and Game Council Chief Executive.

18. Licence Sales and Licence Management System

A. Fish Licence Sales Update – until 30 April 2025

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

- LEQ sales down compared to previous year by 4.7% (2,813 c.f. 2,953)
- Total Number of Sales of licences similar to previous year 0.2% (5,362 c.f. 5,374)
- Nationally licence sales value LEQ is similar to previous year 0.2% (70,658 c.f. 70,512).

B. Game Licence Sales Update – until 5 May 2025

Mr Teal provided a brief summary of the Game licence sales for the 2025 Game Season up until 5 May 2025 (the Monday after opening weekend):

- LEQ sales similar to previous year (3,095 c.f. 3,103)
- Total Number of Sales of licences similar to previous year (3,487 c.f. 3,486)
- Nationally licence sales value LEQ is down 1.8% (29,431 c.f. 29,957).

It was moved that

Council receive Licence Sales Report for 2024/2025 Fishing Season YTD (up to 30 April 2025) and 2025 Game Season YTD (up to 5 May 2025)

Aaron Passey/Ben Hancock

Carried

A. Licence Management System – March and April 2025

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

It was then moved

Council receive the update report for March and April 2025 for performance of provider of services to manage the licensing platform and database management.

Jim Cook/Kieran Bell

Carried

19. Operational Summary 1 March 2025 to 30 April 2025

After discussion and clarification it was moved

Council to receive the staff report on Operational Summary for March 2025 and April 2025

Terry Inglis/Paul Dewar

Carried

20. Financial Statements to 30 April 2025 and Financial Transactions for March and April 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 April 2025 and Financial Transactions for March and April 2025.

Ben Hancock/Aaron Passey

Carried

Mr Teal confirmed that he was still looking at options for leasing alternative office premises, and also options for vehicle replacement before the end of the Financial Year – but neither would be progressed until presented to Council for approval.

21. Correspondence and Media

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

22. 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.

23. 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 received any feedback regarding appointments to the Wellington Conservation Board other than acknowledging his nomination. It is anticipated that any appointments would be made mid-year.

24. General Business

There were no specific items of general business noted before or during the meeting that were required to be addressed.

Council was updated on an access issue to hunting stands in wetlands at Wairarapa Moana where stand holders had failed to obtain permissions to cross private land to access their site and were issued a trespass notice by NZ Police who were assisting in compliance operations.

Councillor Hancock confirmed that he attended the opening of the public access bridge at Kourarau Dam - which was officially opened by Ron Mark (Mayor of Carterton District Council) in front of about 30 on-lookers including representatives from Trust House, Fish and Game, and local farmers. He acknowledged the work of Hamish Carnachan to achieve a positive solution-focused outcome for anglers and the wider public.

Councillor Inglis acknowledged the efforts of Paul Browne in co-ordinating a BBQ for Wairarapa Moana hunters on opening weekend at Kilmore Lodge – and the positive feedback and interactions that had occurred.

There were no further specific items of general business, the meeting closed at 6.10pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Tuesday, 12 August 2025 at Club Wairarapa, 20 Essex Street, Masterton at 3.00pm.

Chairman  Date 16/9/25