



New Zealand Fish and Game Council

BOARD PACK

for

NZC Meeting 180

Friday, 27 February 2026

10:00 am (NZDT)

Held at:

West Plaza Hotel

110 Wakefield Street, Te Aro, Wellington

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AGENDA

NZC MEETING 180



Name:	New Zealand Fish and Game Council
Date:	Friday, 27 February 2026
Time:	10:00 am to 5:00 pm (NZDT)
Location:	West Plaza Hotel , 110 Wakefield Street, Te Aro, Wellington
Board Members:	Barrie Barnes (Chair), Bill O'Leary, Daniel Isbister, Dave Harris, Debbie Oakley , Euan Williamson, Greg Duley, Mark Sceats, Mike Barker, Romon Sargeson, Steve Haslett, Peter Bayliss
Attendees:	Adrienne Murray, Corina Jordan, Graeme Nahkies, Jill Muench, Richard Cosgrove, Rosamond Connelly
Apologies:	DAVE COLL

1. Procedural Matters

1.1 Open Meeting/Welcome: NZC Meeting #180

Barrie Barnes

Note meeting arrangements/welcome everyone, including guests/speakers and members of the public.

Supporting Documents:

1.1.a 27_2_2026_NZC Meeting 180 Agenda v2.docx

1.2 Apologies/Declaration of Interests

Barrie Barnes

FOR DECISION

Supporting Documents:

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1.3 Interest Register

1.4 Motion to go into a public excluded session

Supporting Documents:

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2. Public Excluded

2.1 Confirm Public excluded Minutes Meeting #178

3. Procedural Matters cont.

3.1 Confirm Minutes NZC Meeting #178 and #179

For Noting

Supporting Documents:

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3.1.b	Minutes : NZC Meeting 179 - GameBird Regulations - 9 Feb 2026	19

3.2 Matters Arising

Barrie Barnes

FOR NOTING

3.3 Calling for items of General business

3.4 NZC Risk Register Report

Corina Jordan

FOR NOTING

4. Decision Items

4.1 Governance Work Progam Review and finalasation

Supporting Documents:

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4.3 Crop Depredation Policy

FOR DECISION

Supporting Documents:

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4.4 Natural Resources and Legislation Policy

FOR DECISION

Supporting Documents:

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4.5 Health & Safety Overarching Framework Policy

FOR DECISION

Supporting Documents:

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4.6 Health & Safety Staff Committee and TOR

Richard Cosgrove

FOR DECISION

Supporting Documents:

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4.7 Regional Budget Process

FOR DISCUSSION

Regional Budget Process & Establishment of a Governance Annual Budgeting Committee (TOR)

5. Information Papers for Noting

5.1 CEO Report

10:00 am (60 min)

Corina Jordan

FOR NOTING

- · F&G Reform submission
- · RM3 Reform submission
- · Arms Act Reform submission
- · Stewardship Land update

5.2 COO Report

Richard Cosgrove

For Noting

FOR NOTING

- · Operations update including NCFGC update
- · Digital Ecosystem RFP update

- · RM fund update;
- · Compliance update;
- · Licence sales update
- · Finance Report
- · Variance Report
- · Reserves Report
- Remuneration review

Supporting Documents:

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5.3 Game bird population monitoring policy - Late Paper

Corina Jordan

FOR DISCUSSION

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Corina Jordan

FOR NOTING

Supporting Documents:

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Supporting Documents:

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5.5 General Business

6. Review/Close of Meeting

6.1 Meeting 180

Next meeting: No date for the next meeting has been set.

Interests Register

New Zealand Fish and Game Council

As of: 27 Feb 2026



Person	Organisation	Active Interests	Notice Date
Barrie Barnes	Alpha Pistol Club	Foundation Member	23 Aug 2022
	North Shore Flyfishers Inc	Treasurer	23 Aug 2022
Bill O'Leary	Nelson Conservation Board	Board Member	19 Apr 2024
Greg Duley	New Zealand Conservation Authority	Member	23 Aug 2022
	NZ Hunter - Magazine and TV Show	Owner	4 Dec 2021
Mike Barker	Mata Au Sports Fish Trust	Trustee	28 Nov 2023
Steve Haslett	ECAN/Brother-in-law Chair of risk, Finance & Audit committee	Extended Family	10 Feb 2023

Standing Orders: Motion to Exclude the Public

New Zealand Fish and Game Council Meeting #180

For Decision

Motion to Exclude the Public

Recommendation:

1. *That the New Zealand Fish and Game Council:*
 - (a) *pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 exclude the public from the following part of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:*

GENERAL SUBJECT OF EACH MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED	REASON FOR PASSING THIS RESOLUTION IN RELATION TO EACH MATTER	GROUND(S) UNDER SECTION 48(1) FOR THE PASSING OF THIS RESOLUTION
		Good reason to withhold exists under section 7
Confirm Public Excluded Minutes NZC Meeting 175 – 28 June 2025	For the reasons set out in the Part I minutes held with public present.	Section 48(1)(a)(ii) That the public conduct of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist.

- (b) *And that relevant NZC staff remain to provide advice to the Council on applicable items.*

MINUTES (in Review)

NZC MEETING 178



Name:	New Zealand Fish and Game Council
Date:	Friday, 5 December 2025
Time:	9:30 am to 5:30 pm (NZDT)
Location:	North Canterbury Fish and Game Office, 595 Johns Road
Board Members:	Barrie Barnes (Chair), Daniel Isbister, DAVE COLL, Dave Harris, Debbie Oakley , Euan Williamson, Greg Duley, Mark Sceats, Mike Barker, Romon Sargeson, Steve Haslett
Attendees:	Adrienne Murray, Corina Jordan, Graeme Nahkies, Jill Muench, Nuha Hayat, Richard Cosgrove, Rosamond Connelly, Helen Brosnan
Apologies:	Sam Speight, Bill O'Leary

1. Opening meeting

1.1 Chair to open up meeting

It was noted that Craig McKenzie was present representing the Central South Island.

1.2 Matters Arising

Progress on action items were noted.

1.3 Apologies/Declaration of Interests



178 Apologies

That apologies for absence be received from Bill O' Leary and Sam Speight.

Decision Date:	5 Dec 2025
Mover:	Mark Sceats
Seconder:	Mike Barker
Outcome:	Approved

1.4 Confirm Minutes of Meeting 176 and Meeting 177

NZC Meeting 176 29 Aug 2025, the minutes were confirmed with the following changes:

Sam Speight and Debbie Oakley were apologies

NZC Extraordinary meeting - 177 23 Oct 2025, the minutes were confirmed as presented.

1.5 CEO Report



CEO Report

That the Council:

1. **Receive** the information.

Decision Date: 5 Dec 2025

Outcome: Approved

The current focus area is progression of the Fish & Game Bill. Corina has had several meetings with Ministers and has spoken to DoC and nine out of the 12 F&G regional councils.

The Bill is expected to have its first reading in February after Waitangi weekend.

Majority of the regions support the Bill but they have concerns regarding:

- Advocacy function
- Allocation of funding
- Increasing DOC oversight
- Increased Ministerial oversight
- The possibility of the view of our licence holders being overridden
- Conflict of interest with members of F&G being in other positions
- Reduction of council members
- A few regions were also concerned that NZC would cause for there to be an overall centralisation causing there to be costs that have yet to be fully realise

Despite the fact that the wording of the Bill is not yet known we are confident regarding the policy points it will address. Corina is developing a suite of "will say" statements for people to agree to this side of Christmas. A comms and engagement plan will also be developed prior to Christmas.

Note that AI will be employed to process submissions. If submissions made by regions are seen as duplicates, they will only be counted as one.

Corina also agreed to develop a presentation that can be used by the council members to talk to the fishing clubs across the regions - a webinar can also be developed. Support has been given out to regional CE's as this is a substantial change.

Finally, Corina provided an update of the very successful Parliamentary Fishing Event, held the previous week.

2. Decision Required

2.1 RMA Legal Fund Update (Tranche 2)



Item 2.1 RMA Legal Fund

1. **Approved** funding of up to 101,000 for submission writing work for the Fish and Game Bill and Select Committee process, which was approved at the extraordinary meeting 177 on 23 October 2025.
2. **Approves** 50,000 to Auckland/ Waikato for Whangamarino Weir re-consenting application as discussed at Workshop held on 25th November 2025. See appendix 1 for details from the workshop.
3. **Approves** \$30,000 for experts when required for Fast Track applications. See further details in the funding application attached in appendix 5.

4. **Notes** update provided by NZC and Hawkes Bay Fish and Game regarding the decision from the Tranche 2 case. See Appendix 2a for a summary of the case and Appendix 2b for a copy of the PowerPoint presentation that Sally Gepp presented to Hawkes Bay Fish & Game and in a staff webinar covering key aspects of the case for Fish and Game.
5. **Notes** an overview of NZC advocacy that has occurred since the August NZC meeting, as summarised in Appendix 3.
6. **Notes** that as of 31 Oct 2025, the RMA fund has committed funds of \$489,936. The remaining uncommitted funds of \$178,718 are available for new cases, including the funding applications for the Weir and Fast Track projects detailed in this report. The RMA fund summary table is included in appendices 6 & 7.
7. **Request** information from regions regarding what upcoming RMA cases they may have over the current financial year, to allow better budget planning and prioritisation.

Decision Date:	5 Dec 2025
Mover:	DAVE COLL
Seconder:	Mark Sceats
Outcome:	Approved

An abstention was recorded for Dave Harris due to lack of information

Fast Track Applications:

The money approved for support for Fast Track Applications has not been granted in relation to any particular consent/ project (although we anticipate that funding will be used to support input into the Bendigo Mine application - Otago). This is because the speed of applications being considered through the Fast-Track process is too rapid for our usual financial approval process. Instead, a pot of funding has been approved, which can be accessed when a relevant fast track application arises.

RMA Fund:

Historically we have topped-up our RMA fund to 800K though last year it was only topped up by 100k due to funding constraints. We have asked regions to comment on the RMA policy to find out how we want use the fund and what level of funding we want to have available in 2026 and beyond.

2.2 Crop Depredation Policy



That New Zealand Council: Receives this update on the authorisat...

That New Zealand Council:

1. **Receives** this update on the authorisation under the Wildlife Act.
2. **Notes** a new template from DOC has been received that enables Regions to disturb/kill game birds under s53 of the Wildlife Act.
3. **Approves** the draft NZC Crop Depredation Policy to go to the regions for consultation.

Decision Date:	5 Dec 2025
Mover:	Romon Sargeson
Seconder:	Dave Harris
Outcome:	Approved

NZC has approved the Crop Depredation Policy to go out for consultation with the regions. This policy stems from a situation where a recent legal case has revealed that our authorisations issued by DoC are not consistent with the law. The Crop Depredation Policy covers what can be done without a permit and what activity requires a permit (eg handling or harming of birds, use of firearms). The policy includes an overview of species to which the policy relates, susceptible crops, how to be vigilant and to act immediately to scare off birds. There is a section on methods of dispersing birds, a summary and an overview of the response to game birds causing damage.

2.3 NZC Financial Audit - Late

Changes that were made to our KiwiSaver have not yet been included in our audit. Though our budget has returned to our 2024/2025 baseline with an added allowance of 2.5% which requires approval.

Lastly it was concluded that Fish and Game needed a certain amount in reserves to have a working capital, and this should be done while considering the different financial states of the regions. Though councillor Euan opposed to this as this approach could lead to us diverting from the Act.

2.4 Steve Haslett: Letter of Resignation Research Subcommittee

A letter from Steve Haslett announcing his resignation from the Research Subcommittee was tabled. Steve's rationale and the consequences for Fish & Game research were discussed in conjunction with the item on the future structure for research (including the option of an external research panel).

2.5 Research Expert Panel



Item 2.5 Research Expert Panel

That the Council:

1. **Defer** conversation on the research subcommittee to February meeting and bring back a revised ToR workshopped by Governors and Staff

Decision Date:	5 Dec 2025
Mover:	Mike Barker
Seconder:	DAVE COLL
Outcome:	Approved

The scope and operations of the existing research subcommittee has not been optimal - as evidenced by Steve's resignation. There are also matters that are tricky for the staff to navigate in terms of having governance representatives helping in an operational capacity. Having a dedicated staff research position and being upfront regarding the governance/operational tensions and how to manage them should allow for the system to work better.

A revised terms of reference that acknowledges the unique setup and establishes clear scope and expectations will be developed for February.

2.6 Infringement policy



Item 2.6 Infringement Policy

That the Council:

1. **Receive** the information regarding regional consultation feedback on the Infringement Notice Compliance and Enforcement Policy.
2. **Agree** to amend the Infringement Notice Compliance and Enforcement Policy to incorporate:
 - Northland's recommended changes regarding the Compliance Decision Group (CDG) decision-making authority
 - Hawke's Bay's recommended clarifications regarding Compliance Coordinator requirements
 - Nelson Marlborough's recommended additions for alternative court-sanctioned restorative justice processes and inter-regional support
3. **Note** that six regions provided feedback, with four supporting without qualification, one supporting subject to clarifications (Hawke's Bay), one supporting the concept but raising practical concerns (Nelson Marlborough), and one region (Otago) raising concerns about the consultation process and overall value.
4. **Agree** to submit the amended Infringement Notice Compliance and Enforcement Policy, along with the Prosecutions Policy, Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Justice, and supporting appendices to the Minister for Hunting & Fishing for approval and gazetting.
5. **Delegate** to the Chief Operating Officer the authority to make minor editorial amendments to the policy documents prior to submission to the Minister.
6. **Note** that implementation will require Ministerial approval, training of authorised rangers, establishment of IT systems, and ongoing collaboration with the Department of Conservation

Decision Date:	5 Dec 2025
Mover:	Mark Sceats
Seconder:	Romon Sargeson
Outcome:	Approved

An abstention was recorded from Craig McKenzie.

NZC signed off on the Infringement Policy, following consultation with the regions. This policy is required under section 26HA of the Conservation Act 1987 and must be approved by the Minister for Hunting & Fishing before Fish & Game can issue infringement notices. The infringement notice system will provide an intermediate compliance tool between warnings and court prosecutions, allowing proportionate responses to lower-level offences whilst maintaining the prosecution pathway for serious or repeat offending. This modernises Fish & Game's compliance approach and addresses current inconsistencies. The Chief Operating Officer will revise the policy to incorporate feedback and then submit it to the Minister for approval.

2.7 Move to public excluded



Public Excluded Motion

Recommendation:

1. **That** the New Zealand Fish and Game Council:

(a) pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 exclude the public from the following part of the proceedings of this meeting (for the reasons provide for in the table)

(b) And that relevant NZC staff remain to provide advice to the Council on applicable items.

Decision Date: 5 Dec 2025
Mover: Sam Speight
Seconder: DAVE COLL
Outcome: Approved

Abstention by Dave Harris

3. Reports to Note

3.1 Reserves Update



Reserves Update

That the New Zealand Fish and Game Council:

1) Receive the information.

Decision Date: 5 Dec 2025
Mover: Euan Williamson
Seconder: Steve Haslett
Outcome: Approved

After COVID the new reserves level was reduced to 20% of annual operating expenses. It has been policy that where a council's reserves have fallen below 20% then they are able to apply for a top up of reserves.

Due to the legislative changes expected in 2026 licences are expected to be sold centrally from the beginning of the 2026-27 financial year. This will mean that all regions will be bulk funded, on a monthly basis by NZC. This will have an implication for the level of reserves required.

3.2 COO report



Item 3.2

That the New Zealand Fish and Game Council:

1) Receive the information.

Decision Date: 5 Dec 2025
Mover: Dave Harris
Seconder: Mike Barker
Outcome: Approved

The Parliamentary Fishing event had very good reception and the Members of Parliament who attended left with a positive outlook of the event. There was good coverage across political parties. Consideration will be given to holding a similar event for DoC Staff.

3.3 NZC H&S report



Item 3.3

That the Council:

1. Receive the information.

2. Note that there have been no physical incidence, 0 accidents and 0 near misses in the reporting period

3. Note the concern regarding the wellbeing of staff due to high workloads and workplace tensions across Fish and Game continues

Decision Date: 5 Dec 2025
Mover: Romon Sargeson
Seconder: Mike Barker
Outcome: Approved

3.4 Annual Meeting and Budget Schedule



Item 3.4

That the New Zealand council

1. **Receive** the information.
2. **Agree** to the annual budget and meeting schedule

Decision Date: 5 Dec 2025
Mover: Mark Sceats
Seconder: Euan Williamson
Outcome: Approved

3.5 TFAC Update - Verbal Update



Item 3.5 TFAC

That the council:

1. **Bring** information back to Feb meeting on licence categories/sale to allow discussion on category optimisation (with particular reference to the family license change which required the compulsory inclusion of a child).

Decision Date: 5 Dec 2025
Mover: Dave Harris
Seconder: Euan Williamson
Outcome: Approved

Debbie led a discussion on the introduction of the Family pass changes and whether this had led to a decline in the number of family passes being bought. This was contrasted with the framework is being used in Taupo which is more inclusive.

Overall there has been a concerning trend of declining licence sales that must be looked into.

3.6 GBHT Report



Item 3.6

That the New Zealand Council:

1. **Do not** agree to the hunter licence fee contribution for the Habitat Stamp being \$6.00 for the 2027 game season. (status quo to remain)
2. **Agree** the game bird or other wildlife species to be depicted on the 2028 habitat stamp be open to any game bird species.
3. **Agree** to a photographic competition to select the artwork of the 2028 stamp.
4. **Note** the Trust Board's 2026 meeting will be held in Invercargill on 22 August 2026.

Decision Date: 5 Dec 2025
Mover: Euan Williamson
Seconder: Greg Duley
Outcome: Approved

3.7 General Business



General Business

1. **Bring** discussion/information on cost benefit of changing Wildlife Regulation 1955 (or other mechanism) to allow for Hunting event licence and how would this be implemented.

Decision Date: 5 Dec 2025
Mover: Dave Harris
Seconder: Euan Williamson
Outcome: Approved



Item 3.7

That the New Zealand Council:

1. **Write** to the regions outlining the statutory requirements for regulations making and the NZC policy and require them to consider these ahead of their Gamebird regulation setting.

Decision Date: 5 Dec 2025
Mover: DAVE COLL
Seconder: Dave Harris
Outcome: Approved

Despite alternative regional approaches, regulations must be reviewed annually (even if no changes are ultimately recommended) due to statutory obligations. This process ensures that the Minister is provided with up-to-date and relevant information.

Managers are asked to write to their respective regions as they must consider necessary adjustments to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. While the immediate focus is on game bird regulations, regions should apply the same considerations to both game and fisheries.

4. Close Meeting

4.1 Close the meeting

Next meeting: No date for the next meeting has been set.

Friday Close 5.40 pm

Saturday Close 12.55 pm.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

MINUTES (in Review)

NZC MEETING 179 - GAMEBIRD REGULATIONS



Name:	New Zealand Fish and Game Council
Date:	Monday, 9 February 2026
Time:	7:00 pm to 7:45 pm (NZDT)
Location:	Teams Meeting, Microsoft Teams
Board Members:	Barrie Barnes (Chair), Bill O'Leary, Daniel Isbister, DAVE COLL, Dave Harris, Debbie Oakley, Euan Williamson, Mark Sceats, Mike Barker, Romon Sargeson, Sam Speight, Steve Haslett
Attendees:	Graeme Nahkies, Richard Cosgrove
Apologies:	Greg Duley, Corina Jordan

1. Opening Meeting

1.1 Welcome

1.2 Apologies

2. Major Decisions and Discussions

2.1 Game Bird Hunting Regulation



Support the proposed Northland regional regulation changes as submitted by the region

Steve Haslett abstained from each vote on the proposed regulations at the meeting

Decision Date:	9 Feb 2026
Mover:	Dave Harris
Seconder:	Bill O'Leary
Outcome:	Approved



Support the proposed Auckland Waikato regional regulation changes as submitted by the region

Steve Haslett abstained from this motion
Euan Williamson opposed this motion

Decision Date:	9 Feb 2026
Mover:	Bill O'Leary
Seconder:	Mark Sceats
Outcome:	Approved



Support the proposed Nelson Marlborough regional regulation changes as submitted by the region

Steve Haslett abstained from this motion

Decision Date:	9 Feb 2026
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Mover: DAVE COLL
Seconder: Mark Sceats
Outcome: Approved



Support the proposed Southland regional regulation changes as submitted by the region

Steve Haslett Abstained from this motion

Decision Date: 9 Feb 2026
Mover: Mark Sceats
Seconder: Bill O'Leary
Outcome: Approved

There was a detailed discussion about the proposal from each region by the council. The council also highlighted the short timeframe from receiving the supporting information to the NZC meeting, and was keen for the development of a template for regions to provide their changes in a consistent format because of that. Council also requested a refresher at future meeting of the regulation-setting process for clarity. Councillor Haslett said we need to provide a robust statistical process and guidelines for regions.

2.2 Arms Act



Receive the Arms Act submission

Council wanted to recognise the efforts of staff formally (principally Anthony van Dorp and Helen Brosnan) in the production of the submission and supported its submission to the Ministry of Justice.

Decision Date: 9 Feb 2026
Mover: Bill O'Leary
Seconder: DAVE COLL
Outcome: Approved

3. Other Business

4. Close Meeting

4.1 Close the meeting

Next meeting: NZC Meeting 180 - 27 Feb 2026, 10:00 am

Signature: _____

Date: _____



New Zealand Fish & Game Council Work planning Workshop 2026/27

Values

That guide how we work



Trust

We are trusted as consistent and capable providers of services to Fish & Game stakeholders and Mana Whenua

Inclusion

We recognise and respect the diverse range of perspectives and cultural interests of our stakeholders

Connection

We are deeply connected, understanding anglers, hunters, regulators and public interest groups

Service

We are enthusiastic, professional, kind, and accountable to each other and our community

Summary

Facilitators:
Graeme Nahkies and Corina Jordan

Participants:
Barrie Barnes, Greg Duley, Dave Coll, Steve Haslett, Mike Barker, Romon Sargeson, Euan Williamson, Mark Sceats, Debbie Oakley, Dave Harris, Craig McKenzie, Bill O’Leary,

The New Zealand Fish & Game Council met at the North Canterbury Fish & Game office in Christchurch on 5 December 2025 to develop their governance workplan for 2026/27. The main outcomes of the workshop were to create a plan that focused council on its core governance imperatives, was largely future focused, and would ensure that board time was utilised efficiently and effectively.

The workshop traversed a series of activities to gain a shared understanding of the organisations governance and operating context and strategic priority areas moving forward, and then considered the necessary elements of the New Zealand Fish & Game Councils work plan for 2026/27.

The workshop focused initially on gaining a shared understanding of why governors should create their own workplan. This was achieved through a presentations by Graeme Nahkies, Governance Advisor for the New Zealand Fish & Game Council, who took the council through the importance of developing their own work plan, and which highlighted the key take home messages from “Why does your board need an annual agenda” which was pre-circulated reading.

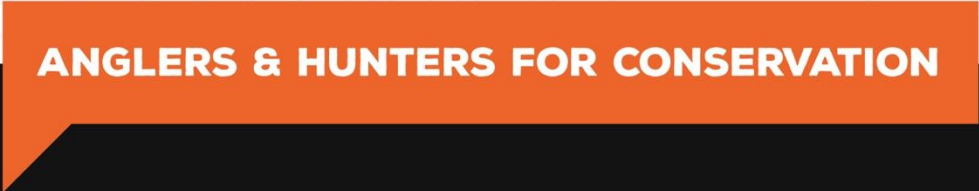
Time	Descripti	
10.10 – 10.25pm	Morning tea	
10.25pm – 10.40pm	Introduction – Why Councils should design their governance work program	Graeme
10.40am – 11.00am	Presentation – Statutory requirements, Strategic Priorities, and Reform	Corina
11am – 11.30am	Design think session – Break into groups Q1 – Councils Strategic Priorities 2025/2026 Q2 – Key Risk Areas for Consideration	Corina Facilitate
11.30am – 11.50pm	Design think session – groups Q3 – Interest areas for deep dive papers Q4 – Dashboard papers	Corina Facilitate
11.50am – 12pm	Next steps and close	Corina
12pm	Workshop finish	

The workshop then focused on the Councils baseline requirements for meeting its statutory functions, along with reviewing the proposed Fish & Game legislative changes to identify additional priority matters for the Council in 2026/27 to support modernization of the organisation and implementation of legislative reform. This was achieved through presentations by Ms Corina Jordan, CEO New Zealand Fish & Game Council.

The third part of the workshop focused on taking the councilors through a design think session where they turned their mind to 4 key questions:

- 1.Councils Strategic Priorities 2026/27
- 2.Key risk areas for consideration
- 3.Interest areas for deep dive papers;
- 4.Priority papers that should be presented in a dashboard format

This tracker document provides a record of workshop process and outputs. It should be used as an input to assist the New Zealand Fish & Game Council finalise its 2026/27 Governance Work Plan.



What we set out to do

Design the NZC governance work plan 2026/27:

- Create a shared sense of purpose, direction and cohesion;
- Identify the priority workstreams for the board with a future focus;
- Streamline and focus the Agendas for the efficient and effective use of the boards time;
- Specific focus areas to include consideration of:
 - NZC statutory requirements;
 - Organisations strategic priorities;
 - Leadership, culture, and the organisations values
 - Key legislative reforms and frameworks and policies which will be required to be in place to support modernisation of the organisation
 - Identify for priority papers those that should be a deep dive and those that should be dashboards
- Shift the boards thinking and the balance of its time towards matters that are important but not urgent (e.g. environmental monitoring, strategic thinking, policy-making, relationship-building, risk characterisation, organisational modernisation).

How we went about it

How we went about it...



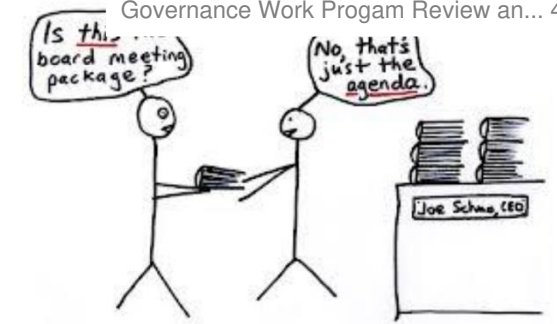
Fish & Game
NEW ZEALAND

The workshop traversed a series of activities to gain a shared understanding of operating context and to consider key elements of strategy & planning

ANGLERS & HUNTERS FOR CONSERVATION

What was on our minds

Why Governors should create their own workplan



The time a board has for its members to meet face-to-face is arguably its scarcest resource. There are many pressures on that time and, consequently, a tendency to overload the agenda with a focus on day to day operational matters and management. For boards to be effective and efficient their valuable time should be spent not looking back and focussed on management, but rather focussing on high value strategic organisational matters which address current and emerging risks, and ensure that the organisation is future proofed and resilient.

A board work plan, often referred to as an annual agenda, is a particularly valuable tool. It will help a board to focus on those subjects and processes central to its ability to add value to organisational performance. An annual agenda defines and schedules in advance the two primary categories of the board's work:

1. the things it must do (usually because it is legally and contractually obliged to); and the
2. things it should work on (because dealing with those will be the most impactful use of the board's time).

The preparation of an annual agenda by the board offers many advantages. It creates consciousness (and conversation) about what is the best use of the board's time over an extended period, and helps the board focus on what is important but not necessarily urgent to support the board get ahead of challenges. It is an explicit planning process that extends the board's thinking about what it needs to work on beyond the next meeting. It signals to management ahead of time what preparation has to be done to support that board's deliberations on the matters that make it onto the annual agenda. If, for example, a board committee also needs to be involved in preparatory work, it is also forewarned and can plan its work accordingly (Nahkies, 2026).

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What was on our minds

Why Governors should create their own workplan

Important and Urgent	Important but Not Urgent
Not Important But Urgent	Not Important and Not Urgent

It enables the whole board to be involved in thinking about what should occupy the board's attention. This whole-of-board involvement has several side benefits. Including empowering the board to be accountable for its own content as well as the conduct of its meetings and its outcomes. It forces the board to be realistic about, and prioritise, the time it has available to consider key decisions and other matters of strategic significance properly. It might also indicate that the board needs to schedule more meeting time than it has customarily. It allows unavoidable administrative and compliance-type activities to be spread out over the year, ensuring that these do not take up too much time at any one board meeting. Lastly, it highlights the interrelationships between different matters that make it onto the prioritised list and schedules these for attention at the most appropriate time and in the most useful sequence.

When developing an annual agenda, the scheduling of matters for the board's attention should reflect an appropriate balance between the need to ensure the organisation complies with policy, delegated authority, etc., and statutory and contractual requirements (conformance), and the need to address matters that will improve organisational performance. It is suggested that at least 70% of a board meeting time should be in the second category

Some flexibility will also be required, as scheduling ahead of time though development of an annual (or longer) Agenda, does not anticipate new and significant issues that may arise and require the board's attention. When this happens, flexibility is required to enable the chair to adjust the agenda to address these issues. It will be important to outline why emergent issues take priority and need urgent attention and to reschedule based on priority any issues that may have had to be bumped to later meetings. Alternatively it may highlight the need to extraordinary meetings or even workshops to get ahead of the priority matters in effectively leading the organisation (Nahkies, 2026).

ANGLERS & HUNTERS FOR CONSERVATION

What was on our minds

New Zealand Fish & Game Councils Statutory functions and deadlines

Decision	Date
Game Bird Notice (submission to DOC 3 rd Feb 2026)	January or early Feb
Remuneration Review	28 February & 2 March
Variance Reports	
Reserves report	
Licence Provision Contract renewal (not required in 2026)	
Licence Sales Forecast	
Finance Reports	
Governors forum - joint NZC Regional Chairs Strategy Workshop	1 March
Staff Development Applications	11 & 12 April
Licence Forecast	
Draft NZC and National Budget	
Draft NZC Annual Work plan	
Draft Regional Budget Discussions	
Finance Reports	
Sports Fishing & Game Hunting Licence types and fees, Anglers Notice (to DOC by 23 June)	17 & 18 June (online 6 8pm)
Regional Budget Final Decision & Licence fee recommendation to Minister	
Finance reports	
Finalisation of NZC and National Budget	28 & 29 August
Finalisation of Annual Work Plan	
Finance Reports	
End of financial year	31 August
Audit and Annual Report	28 & 29 November
Finance Reports	



3 Our organisational strategy 2023 – 2028

Fish & Game oversees the management of New Zealand's sport fish and game resources. Fish & Game New Zealand is a not for profit public entity with statutory powers and is funded through licence fees.

This strategy was developed in 2022 following a ministerial review conducted in 2021 which noted that Fish & Game New Zealand plays an important role in environmental advocacy and stewardship. The review also noted that the organisation is relatively unchanged since establishment in 1990 and identified significant opportunity to strengthen governance and good management practice.

The strategy outlined here is intended to provide a strengthened, fit-for-purpose organisation more connected with licence holders, wider stakeholders, and Mana Whenua, to sustainably manage fresh water fish and game, to protect and enhance freshwater habitats and the values precious to all New Zealanders.

OUR VISION

Our vision is a New Zealand where freshwater habitats and species flourish, where hunting and fishing traditions thrive and all Kiwis enjoy access to sustainable wild fish and game resources.

OUR PURPOSE

Fish & Game New Zealand maintains and enhances sports fish and game birds, and their habitats, ensuring access for current and future generations of New Zealanders.

OUR VALUES


TRUST


INCLUSION


CONNECTION


SERVICE

Our priorities and objectives

What success looks like for our strategic priorities


UNIFIED & ENDURING ORGANISATION

A national and regionally cohesive organisation built on a culture of shared values, trust and engagement. Delivering on vision and purpose for stakeholders and Mana Whenua. Maintaining the statutory mandates that enable effective service delivery.


ATTRACT & RETAIN LICENCE-HOLDERS

Deliver well-valued and cost-effective experience for licence holders by understanding their needs, providing simple and effective communication, making fishing and game bird hunting more attractive to a wider group of future participants.


MANA WHENUA CONNECTED

Māori values are understood and reflected within Fish & Game with aligned advocacy and a positive collaborative approach that builds upon Te Tiriti obligations defined in the Conservation Act.


PUBLIC PERCEPTION & LEGITIMACY

Understanding and reshaping public perception of Fish & Game New Zealand, angling and game bird hunting through positive messaging of natural environment protection, wild food harvesting and well-being through outdoor recreation.


HEALTHY SPECIES, HABITATS, & ECOSYSTEMS

Sport fish and game bird habitats are healthy. Species are monitored and maintained and sustainable wild harvest opportunities are secured for future generations.

Fish & Games Organisational Strategy

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What was on our minds

Key Strategic Risks to the Organisation identified as High

- Organisational Culture
- Organisational Strategic Plan Implementation
- Effective R³ (Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation) Organisational Implementation
- Climate Change and Biosecurity
- Financial management and planning
- Modernising licencing system and creation of a digital ecosystem
- Fish & Games Reputation
- Recognition and protection for sportsfish and gamebird habitats including in legislation
- Recognition and protection of Sportfish & Gamebirds including through legislation

Strategies, Policies, & Templates Identified in Fish & Game's proposed Legislative Reforms

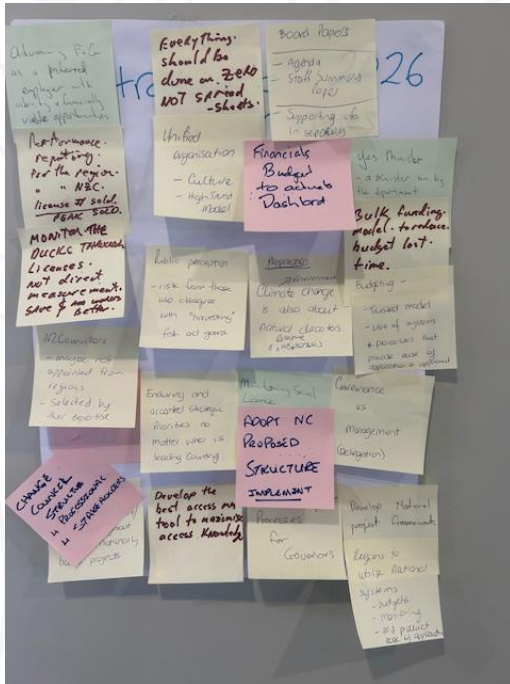
- Organisational Finance Strategy
- Sportsfish & Gamebird Monitoring Policy - drafted
- 10 year Sportsfish & Gamebird Plan policy - completed
- Consolidated Annual report – in progress
- Resource Allocation through secondary legislation
- Advocacy Policy – in progress (RM Fund and process policy out for consultation)
- Human Resource Policies – Workstream over last 3 years
- Business processes and systems
- Forms and Templates for work planning and performance reporting
- Corporate Policies – Baseline policies established
- H&S Policy including system – Workstream over last 3 years
- National Compliance Policy – completed (Infringement System/ policy Decision before NZC)

ANGLERS & HUNTERS FOR CONSERVATION

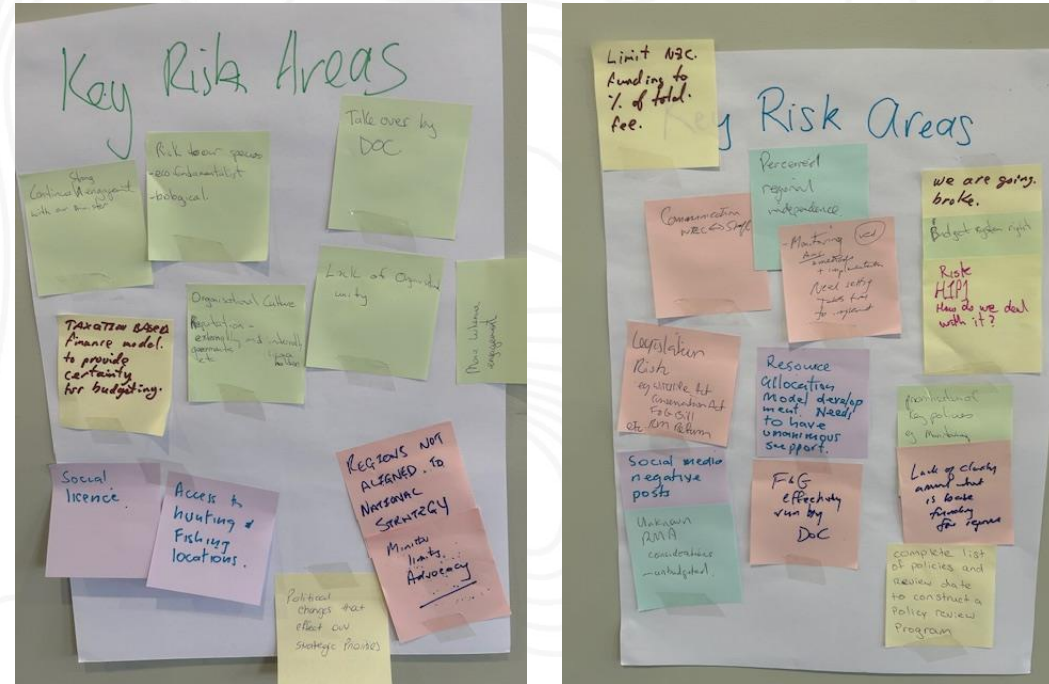
What was on our minds

Design Think Sessions

Q1 Councils Strategic Priorities



Q2 Key Risk Areas



Q3 Deep Dives



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What was on our minds

Design Think Session: Q1 Councils Strategic Priorities 2026

- Advancing F&G as a preferred employer and which provides financial opportunities
- Everything should be done on Xero rather than spreadsheets
- Board papers
- Agenda
- Staff summary papers
- Supporting information to be added in separately
- Bulk funding model to reduce budget lost time
- Budgeting
- Building a high trust model
- Use of systems and processes that provide ease of application and approval
- Governance vs management (delegation)
- Develop national project framework
- Gamebird and Sportsfish Monitoring
- End product ease of application- Due diligence process for ministers
- Enduring and accepted strategic priorities no matter who is leading the country
- Communication
- Staff development opportunities
- Utilisation of staff, our people throughout NZ on nationally based projects
- NZ Councillors
- Maybe not appointed for regions
- Selected by their expertise
- Performance reporting for the region, for NZC as well

ANGLERS & HUNTERS FOR CONSERVATION

- Advancing F&G as a preferred employer with interacts with financial opportunities
- - Everything should be done on Xero rather than spreadsheets
- - Board papers

What was on our minds

Design Think Session: Q2 Key Risk Areas for Consideration

- Minister for Hunting & Fishing - Continue strong engagement with our minister and be mindful of DOC oversight
- Regions not aligned to national strategy
- Minister / Government limits our advocacy
- Take over by DoC
- Social license
- Access to hunting and fishing locations
- Risk to our species
- Eco fundamentalists
- Biological
- Lack of organisational unity
- More lukewarm engagement
- Tax based finance model to provide certainty for budgeting
- Organisational culture
- Reputation- externally and internally
- Risk HPAI - how do we deal with it
- Legislation risk e.g the wildlife act, conservation act and the F&G bill
- Negative publicity
- Unknown RMA considerations- unbudgeted
- Complete list of policies and review date to construct a policy review program
- Resource allocation model development. Needs to have unanimous support
- Perceived regional independence
- Communication between WETC and staff
- Limit NZC funding to percentage of total fee

ANGLERS & HUNTERS FOR CONSERVATION

What was on our minds

Design Think Session: Q3 Interest Areas for Deep Dive Papers

The following are topics the council would like to received as a deep dive paper or as a workshop

- Recruitment strategy for new New Zealanders
- Audits around changing to tier3 entity
- How to generate internal turnover
- Species monitoring standardized so there are minor regional variances
- Species management outcomes
- Fishing license categories – View is that there are too many and should be reduced to see an increase in income
- Effects of climate change and biosecurity advents
- Official Information Act requirements and best practice in addressing OIA's



ANGLERS & HUNTERS FOR CONSERVATION

What was on our minds

Design Think Session: Q3 Interest Areas for Deep Dive Papers

The following are topics the council would like to received as a deep dive paper or as a workshop

- How to achieve a sustainable revenue while sales are declining
- R³ implementation - regional parallel
- Review the policy on retained reserves, should we remove the minimum of 20%.
- Canada Geese reintroduced on game management plan- opportunity to obtain
- Funding to manage population.
- Review the Governments election promises and implementation eg Public access charter and supporting increases public access to public conservation land.



ANGLERS & HUNTERS FOR CONSERVATION

What was on our minds

Design Think Session: Q4 Dashboard Papers

The following are reports the councillors would like to receive semi-regularly:

- YTD finance updates including - YTD actual against the quarterly forecast budget, YTD % against YE budget, and YE budget;
- License sale reports during peak sales periods
- Risk analysis and status
- Health and safety reports
- Innovation program
- Policy program
- Progress reports while the Fish & Game reform is in process
- Stakeholder feedback
- License holder interactions



ANGLERS & HUNTERS FOR CONSERVATION

Draft Governance Work Plan 2026/27

Month	Statutory requirements	Strategic matters
January or early Feb (zoom or 1 day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gamebird Notice (submission to DOC 3rd Feb 26) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submissions Research applications
Late February & early March (2 day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget pre-planning including: Renumeration Review, Variances, reserves, licence forecasts, indicative organisational total budget. Finance reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of priority risks draft NZC Governance Annual Agenda for 2027/28 RM and Legislation Policy final Extension Strategy/ Policy (R³) final draft H&S Framework Policy; draft National H&S Committee Policy Crop deprecation policy Gamebird monitoring report Education and extension – update NZC work program and recommendations for consistent regional implementation (R³)
Early March (1 day) (workshop)		<p>Joint chairs and NZC workshop – focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strategic imperatives, culture, and leadership <p>(it would be good for chairs to also design their annual agenda)</p>
Late March (workshop)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gamebird population Monitoring and policy development
Early April (workshop)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R³ – focus on building education and engagement events
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff development applications Licence sales forecast Draft NZC and National Budget Draft NZC annual work plan Draft Regional Budget Discussions Finance reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gamebird population monitoring policy for consultation H&S and HR policy review and annual plan (F&G reform) H&S Framework Policy final; National H&S Committee Policy final Leadership and Culture paper to support future planning
May (workshop)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Governments election promises and implementation eg. Public access charter and supporting increases public access to public conservation land Review licence holder feedback on who they feel the government has delivered against its elections promises and what the sector wants to see from a future government;

Month	Statutory requirements	Strategic matters
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports fishing & game hunting licence types and fees, anglers notice (to DOC by 23 June) Regional Budget final decisions and licence fee recommendations to Minister Finance reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy policy (F&G Reform) HPAI update and next steps - updated policy draft Consolidated Annual report Update on modernising F&G licencing system and creation of a digital ecosystem. RFP process and next steps
July (workshop)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing F&G finance strategy (budget allocation model, zero based budgeting, organisational systems and processes, template, policies, training)
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final NZC and National budget Final annual work plan Finance reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft finance strategy Final consolidated annual report structure H&S policies (lone worker and others identified through policy review and work plan implementation) HR annual plan implementation (standardised contracts, JD,s, performance reviews, templates)
31 August 26	End of the financial year	Consolidated Report structure in place for 2026/27
September (workshop)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and analysis of organisational risks and opportunities (review Risk Register)
October (workshop)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate and Biosecurity workshop (HPAI update and next steps including Comms)
November (2 day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit and annual report Finance reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final finance strategy Strategic Planning for the next financial year, development of annual council agenda Human Resources review and proposed workplan (policies, templates, training)
January 2027 (1 day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gamebird Notice (submission to DOC X Feb 26) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start review of Fish & Game Organisational Strategy to feed into joint chairs and NZC meeting at the end of Feb/early March Review of Corporate policys and develop work program Access Implementation Plan

Draft Governance Work Plan 2026/27

Dashboard papers provided at every meeting:

- NZC H&S update (1 page);
- Organisational H&S update (2 pages);
- Licence sales (1page);
- RM and legislation, and budget update (3 pages)
- Finance papers
- Communications and advocacy (2 pages)

Additional papers may include:

- RM and legislation applications
- Notice of use of reserves

Ongoing Workstreams:

- Research;
- Sportsfish population monitoring;
- Resource Allocation
- Finance Strategy
- Budget small group

Workshops post November 2026:

- Climate Change and biosecurity (update HPAI)
- Sportsfish population monitoring, analysis, and reporting
- Official Information Act requirements and best practice in addressing OIA's
- Review of Fishing Licence Categories (Southwick workstream) & next steps
- Options for maximising revenue under a declining licence holder scenario and opportunities to grow our licence holder base (R³)

Board papers post November 2026

- Implementation of the Access Strategy
- Implementation of Finance strategy and workplan (policies, processes, templates, training)
- Review of Corporate policies and work program;
- Implementation of HR and HS workplans (policies, templates, training)
- Implementation of Culture and leadership work program
- Review of F&G business processes and systems and workplan development
- Implementation of F&G business processes and systems workplan
- Sportsfish monitoring policy

ANGLERS & HUNTERS FOR CONSERVATION



ANGLERS & HUNTERS FOR CONSERVATION

Draft New Zealand Fish & Game Council Annual Agenda

Month	Statutory requirements	Strategic matters
January or early Feb (zoom or 1 day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gamebird Notice (submission to DOC 3rd Feb 26) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submissions Research applications
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- Review of Corporate policys and work program;
- Implementation of HR and HS workplans (policies, templates, training)
- Implementation of Culture and leadership work program
- Review of F&G business processes and systems and development of workplan (policies, templates, training)
- Implementation of F&G business processes and systems workplan
- Sportsfish monitoring policy

Elections 2027 (subject to change through F&G Reform)

- Public Notice of election 1st week August;
- Electoral roll closes 1st week September
- Election day 1st Friday in October
- Results declared following Saturday
- Councils to have their first meeting within 3 weeks (by last weekend of October)
- NZC to have its first meeting within 3 weeks of the Regioanl Councils 1st meeting (mid / late November).

- NZC Councilors Induction Hui 1st weekend after the election results (17th October 2026).

DRAFT

NZC Crop Depredation Policy

New Zealand Fish and Game Council Meeting 180 – 28 & 29 February 2026

Prepared by: Helen Brosnan, Senior Policy Advisor, NZ Fish and Game Council

Kōrero taunaki - Summary of considerations

Purpose

1. We have updated NZC at meeting 175 regarding wildlife authorisations. Previously, permits were issued under s54 of the Wildlife Act. DOC has provided a new template letter, but we await the replacement authorisation from the Director General to cover sections 53, 54 & 56. We anticipate that this will be available around the time that the Fish and Game Bill is made public. A new template was circulated in appendix 2 of this item in the December papers (meeting 178). No further update is available on these authorisations.
2. In association with Wildlife Authorisations, NZC would like to adopt a Crop Depredation policy for regions to use in relation to these authorisations. We have based this policy on the 2003 NZC Crop Depredation policy, which has also been used by CSI and North Canterbury. The amended draft NZC Crop Depredation Policy is attached in Appendix 1. This policy should assist regions with providing consistent information and advice to licence holders.

Financial considerations

- Nil

 Budgetary provision

 Unbudgeted

Risk

- Low

 Medium

 High

 Extreme

Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations

3. That NZC:
 - a. **Approves** the updated NZC Crop Depredation Policy or
 - b. **Approves** the updated NZC Crop Depredation Policy with the following amendments [to be specified].

Kōrerorero – Discussion

Draft Crop Depredation Policy

4. The attached NZC Crop Depredation Policy is an amendment of the 2003 NZC policy. Staff recommend that NZC adopts this draft for consultation with the regions. This draft policy is attached in Appendix 1. This policy went as a draft to the regions for comment after the December meeting.
5. The policy covers what can be done without a permit and what activity requires a permit (eg handling or harming of birds, use of firearms). The policy includes an overview of species to which the policy relates, susceptible crops, how to be vigilant and to act immediately to scare off birds. There is a section on methods of dispersing birds and a summary and an overview of response to game birds causing damage.

Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga - Considerations for decision-making

Financial Implications

6. There is currently no budget required or requested for this work.

Legislative Implications

7. We note that clause 128 of the Natural Environment Bill provides in RM3 provides for local authorities to issue wildlife permits (along with other permits and consents). We are opposing this proposal in our submission.
8. This policy may be relevant to the evidence that we provide for the Fish and Game Bill, particularly how we operate in relation to others users of habitat (item 53).

Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities

9. There are no Section 4 responsibilities related to this proposal.

Policy Implications

10. Our internal policy and any regions with policy or SOP relating to this issue will need to be reviewed and updated after this policy is adopted.

Risks and mitigations

11. The risk for Fish and Game is that our processes and any outdated policy may need modifying to align with the latest case law.

Consultation

12. The draft policy went to the regions for consultation in December 2025. Their comments were due by 13th February, which is also the closing date for the agenda. Therefore the analysis of their comments will be carried out before the meeting and circulated, but will not be included in this paper.

Ngā mahinga e whai ake nei - Next actions

13. Depending on the outcome of this decision – further amendment or circulation of adopted policy.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – NZC Crop Depredation Policy for adoption

Appendix 2 – Comments from Fish and Game Regions regarding draft draft Crop Depredation Policy – any additional comments to be circulated when received.

DRAFT NEW ZEALAND FISH AND GAME POLICY FOR ADDRESSING CROP DEPREDATION ¹

INTRODUCTION

Fish and Game Councils are responsible for managing, maintaining and enhancing the game bird resource in the recreational interests of hunters.

We anticipate that a new authorization from the Director General will be provided to cover damage to crops under Section 53, 54 and 56 of the Wildlife 1953. The template provided by DOC enables our existing authorization from DOC (2018) to work in the mean time so that the relevant regional council to respond to farmers experiencing crop depredation.

It has been and will continue to be a significant challenge for Fish and Game to provide recreational opportunities that hunters demand while simultaneously managing game bird conflicts with people. Game bird species that Fish and Game manage provide recreational, ecological, and aesthetic benefits to the New Zealand public; balancing and prioritising the often conflicting needs of everyone will continue to be difficult. The following definition comes from the Wildlife Act 1953 relating to hunt or kill:

hunt or kill, in relation to any wildlife, includes the hunting, killing, taking, trapping, or capturing of any wildlife by any means; and also includes pursuing, disturbing, or molesting any wildlife, taking or using a firearm, dog, or like method to hunt or kill wildlife, whether this results in killing or capturing or not; and also includes every attempt to hunt or kill wildlife and every act of assistance of any other person to hunt or kill wildlife

Activity that requires a permit from Fish and Game

Any activity that results in the handling or harming of birds, or requires the use of firearms needs a permit from Fish and Game. Actions that harm birds or their nests without express authority to do so could be subject to legal action by Fish and Game.

The Regional Fish & Game Council will liaise closely with the farming community to provide sufficient advice to assist farmers in dispersing game birds from crops. Regions may be able to loan gas guns, however the dispersal of game birds in perpetuity is the farmer's responsibility.

PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING CROP DEPREDATION

To maintain adequate game bird populations Fish and Game New Zealand depends a great deal on landowners. As natural habitat decreases, it is becoming increasingly crucial that farms are managed with consideration for the requirements of birds. Fortunately, many farmers appreciate that game birds provide added interest and sporting opportunities. Some farmers take active steps to encourage the use of their

¹ Updated and based on the 2003 NZC Crop Depredation Policy

land by game birds. There are times, however, when game birds can cause damage to certain crops or pasture. This need not be a serious problem if the correct action is taken quickly.

Fish & Game Councils are Crown Entities ultimately responsible to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing for managing sports fish and game birds in New Zealand. That responsibility is carried out on behalf of all New Zealanders, but the management costs are borne almost entirely by the purchasers of hunting and fishing licences. The fees for those licences are spent on restoring and creating wetlands, maintaining and enhancing water quality, and retaining and improving public access to water bodies.

As managers of game bird populations, Fish and Game has some responsibility to also manage their impacts on the farming community. Whilst we have a responsibility to game bird hunters to have as many ducks as possible flying on the first weekend in May, we cannot do this to the detriment of the farming community. Therefore, we have a working relationship with farmers, assisting those who contact us when they have a problem with game bird impacts on crops.

SPECIES

Mallards – Mallards are a short-lived species and can rear many young when conditions are suitable. The mallard population does not continually increase but fluctuates depending on conditions encountered during the breeding season. Generally, if we have a wet spring, we have lots of ducks, but a dry spring does not have so many. Wet spring conditions provide plenty of surface water, allowing young ducks to satisfy their high protein demands with plenty of worms, grass grubs, and porina grubs so more of them survive.

Paradise Shelduck – The “Parrie” is one of our native game birds and is longer lived than the mallard. Whilst they can also produce significant numbers of young, they do not start breeding until they are at least two years old. Like all native game birds, they lack some of the guile and cunning of their mallard counterparts. This makes them easier to manage with hunter harvest. Parries eat grass and are often attracted to grain being fed out in the winter.

Black Swan – Is another native game bird. They are longer lived, and do not start breeding until they are at least two years old. Swans typically feed on submerged aquatic vegetation but, at times, can graze on grasses around lake shores causing property owners to complain.

Pukeko and pheasant are two other species that can damage pasture and crops.

SUSCEPTIBLE CROPS

Both Mallards and Paradise Shelduck prefer peas, barley, oats, and wheat. However, with the introduction of highly palatable brassicas and other crops such as chicory, mallards have found a ready food source to fill in the period between nesting and harvest season. The problem has been exacerbated by “chemical ploughing”

and direct drilling. Ducks are attracted to the yellowing grass that yields a ready diet of insects and then stay on to graze the young brassica leaves as they pop out of the ground. Paradise Shelduck can be a problem on peas, but mainly become a nuisance on young grass paddocks.

Some regions have issues with game birds feeding on market garden crops for example Pukeko damaging pumpkins and feeding on or pulling out planted seedlings.

SOLUTIONS

Vigilance

The key to minimising damage to crops is vigilance. Game birds usually take some time to establish a new feeding site, so it is important to spot the potential problem when the first 20 or 30 start into a crop. These initial ducks are relatively easy to move on, whereas big mobs are not. A regular look around the farm at dusk or dawn during the cropping season will detect where ducks are feeding. Ducks do not like to land directly into a standing crop. Therefore, they prefer to have a low spot from which to attack a crop. If an area of the crop has become too wet, resulting in stunted growth, mallards will generally start landing in this area and walk through the crop from this point on. As they themselves knock more of the crop down they will change their initial landing zone. They will also start to attack crops from a grass paddock next door. Crops near ponds and wetlands supporting large numbers of game are likely to be attacked. Crop protection in these situations requires extra vigilance and effort.

Act immediately

Farmers who experience game bird crop-feeding damage should apply immediately to their Regional Fish and Game Council office for assistance. If acted upon early enough, dispersal can generally be achieved without killing birds. In isolated cases, usually involving persistent species such as pukeko, it may be necessary to capture or kill the birds.

Permits

Under section 54 of the Wildlife Act 1953, there is a provision to issue permits for farmers to hunt or kill game birds that are damaging crops. A permit is needed when a firearm is used to disperse or kill birds or where they are trapped for removal.

Permits are intended to assist land owners to disperse game birds who are preying on crops. Permits are not intended for providing hunting opportunities outside the hunting season (dates of season vary by region and species).

Land owners shall report to Fish and Game on the number of birds killed. Fish and Game will be able to report to Director General number of permits issues and number of birds killed in relation to this policy.

METHODS FOR DISPERSING GAME BIRDS

1. *Propane-powered bird scarer*

Gas-operated scare guns can be purchased from several retailers across the country. Occasionally, arrangements can be made to hire a gun through the local Fish and Game Council. The scarer is particularly valuable to farmers in areas where game birds consistently cause damage or show a tendency to return to paddocks from which they have been scared. If you are likely to have annual problems with game birds, it may be advisable to purchase a gas gun.

2. *Firing over birds*

Firing loaded or blank cartridges near the birds can be effective. Firing shots, running of dogs, and extensive human activity are helpful preliminary tactics to the installation of static scaring devices. Shooting ducks/swans is less effective than dispersing them via nonlethal methods. It is far better to have 'scared ducks/swans' than 'dead ducks/swans'. When landowners are given permission to disturb ducks/swans, Fish & Game recommend that they purchase ammunition of small shot size, #8s or so. The smaller the shot, the more pellets you actually fire at birds; therefore, the more birds you are likely to hit in a distant mob. The use of smaller shot also prevents wounding birds as the pellets won't penetrate unless ducks are very close.

3. *Flashing lights, scarecrows and flags*

Flashing lights, spotlights, and scarecrows may be used in conjunction with other scarers to increase effectiveness. A sheet, or piece of unbleached calico, suspended between two 2-metre posts and allowed to flap in the wind, makes a successful scarer, especially if erected before a crop is vulnerable. This method is even more effective if used with flashing lights. Flags 1m x 2m in size can be made of colourful plastic sacks or polythene sheeting. When they are attached to poles 2 or 3 metres high and spaced 200 metres apart about the field, wind causes them to flap and crackle loudly, making them a very useful and cheap scaring method.

4. *Flames and smoke*

Small oil drums filled with sacking and waste oil may be placed around the crop. When the contents of the drums are set alight, the flames and smoke will scare birds. "Burning off" the stubble in adjacent fields has a similar effect, taking note of any local fire bans.

5. *Chemical repellents*

A chemical repellent is available through some seed merchants. The active ingredient of the chemical is methiocarb, which has insecticidal, molluscidal and bird repellent properties. The compound is mixed with the seed at planting or is sprayed onto the foliage. It is used to protect grapes, seedling cereals and vegetables. Methiocarb has a nauseating effect on birds attempting to eat the treated crop, which they soon learn to avoid. The chemical has been successfully used to protect sprouting maize from pukekos. It is illegal in all circumstances for a landowner to use poison or narcotics such as alpha-chlorolase on game birds.

6. *Human activity – essential*

All scare devices lose their effectiveness if left in one position for days. They should be shifted before this value is lost. Human disturbance, where it can be maintained, is always best and will significantly reinforce the effect of static devices.

7. Lasers

Lasers have been recently developed with exceptional results in dispersing game birds. These powerful lasers can be programmed to run during specific times of the day, and to cover specific areas. They can run on a 360-degree rotation, with the speed of turn determined by the user. They are an effective passive tool. They are charged with solar or plugged in.

8. Trapping and removing

This method of counteracting damage can be used on the written authority of the Regional Fish and Game Council. It has proved effective with some species, such as pukeko. Most game birds have a strong "homing instinct" and must be moved many miles away from the trapping site. Consequently, this method becomes impractical in many cases. When transferring pukekos and ducks, it is necessary to clip the primary feathers on one wing. The new habitat, therefore, must be a suitable one with plenty of natural food available, and the birds should not be released where they can cause further damage.

9. Electric fencing

A hot wire about 40cm above the ground and operating at normal voltages will deter swan or geese from walking onto lakeside pastures. It may be useful against ducks in similar situations if set near the ground.

10. Diversionsary feeding areas

Feeding areas have been used in North America for many years as a significant and most successful means of damage prevention and control. A *lure crop* is a field set aside to provide a feeding area for ducks or geese in order to keep them off surrounding fields. A *feeding station* is designed to keep ducks on a lake by spreading grain along the shoreline until the harvest on farmlands is completed. Feeding stations may be operated by placing grain in fields, as well as stubble paddocks.

The advantage of diversionsary feeding areas is in concentrating large numbers of waterfowl in a small area and troubling fewer farmers and ducks. Ducks can be fed on much less grain than they might destroy through wide-ranging field feeding, trampling and fouling. Feeding areas are most effective when operated in conjunction with a scaring programme on the susceptible crops. It is vital that lure crops and feeding stations be left undisturbed. Diversionsary feeding areas are little used in New Zealand. However, the technique is briefly described should an opportunity for use arise.

SUMMARY

To protect your crop from damage by game birds, you should:

1. Be prepared by checking crops regularly for any sign of trouble.
2. Act as soon as there is any indication that birds are being attracted.

3. Apply to your Regional Fish and Game Council for advice and assistance.
4. Apply for a permit if you intend to use a firearm to disperse birds.

Further advice on specific problems relating to crop damage by game birds can be obtained by contacting your Regional Fish and Game Council.

FISH AND GAME RESPONSE TO GAME BIRDS CAUSING DAMAGE

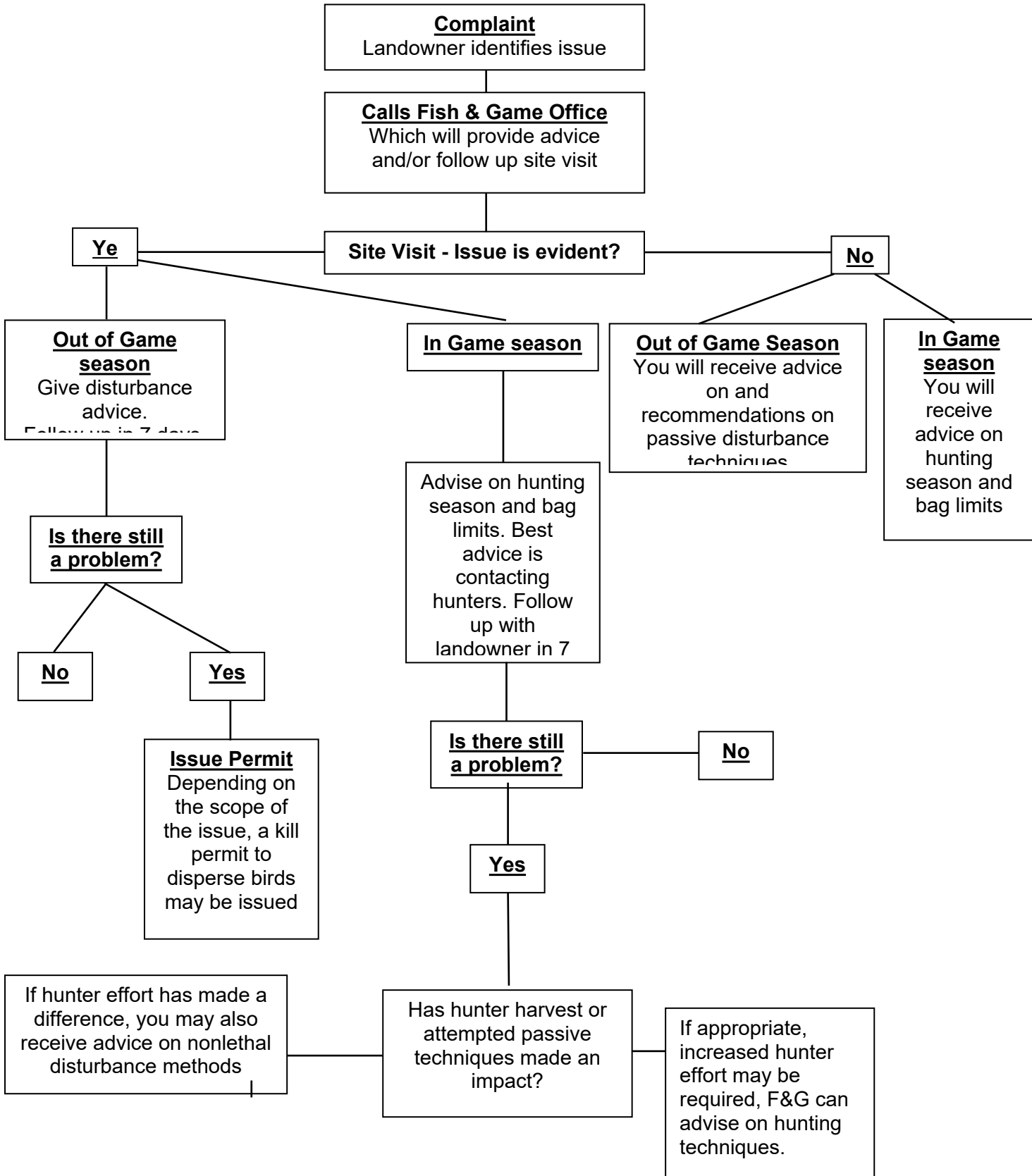
Fish and Game Staff will, upon receiving a complaint of game birds causing damage, respond in the following way:

1. An application will be provided to a landholder seeking assistance to disturb game birds that are causing damage to crops. Such application may only be made by the landholder or leaseholder of the property concerned.
2. Staff will investigate the complaint to confirm that it is valid and, respond to the affected landholder and provide advice on the best course of action to mitigate the problem, including authorizing disturbance, at the Regional Manager's discretion.
3. We will telephone the land owner and discuss the case and ask the following information for our investigation: This will include the location of the property affected, the number and species of gamebirds causing the damage, the crop or property being damaged, the name of the landholder or leaseholder, and the name(s) of the people to be authorized by either the permit holder or Fish and Game staff to undertake disturbance.
4. The completed assessment and the terms and conditions of the draft permit will be provided to the applicant for verification and signature to confirm agreement. On receipt of the signed assessment and agreement to the terms and conditions of the draft permit from the applicant, Fish and Game will issue the permit in a timely manner.
5. All permits must be issued under s53, 54 and 56 as relevant. If the main activity is disturbance, the number of days that the permit is valid and when relevant the number of birds of each species that can be killed.

6. The Council will maintain devices to disperse game birds and mitigate the effects of crop damage. These will be available for loan or rental to properties affected by game birds.
7. Property owners experiencing their first case of crop depredation by game birds will be instructed in methods to mitigate the adverse effects on their crops. A demonstration of techniques, including the loan of a scaring device, if available, will be given.
8. All property owners who are affected by crop depredation will be encouraged to purchase devices as appropriate to mitigate damage in the future. The principle of self-determination will be encouraged for landholders seeking assistance following the initial demonstration and advice.
9. Permits to disturb will be issued pursuant to 54 of the Wildlife Act (1953) and under the limitations of this Policy.
 - When Staff have verified that game birds are causing damage, they will decide on a course of action from within the disturbance only methods and advise the landholder.
 - Staff will undertake or directly oversee the disturbance only exercises.
10. Permits to disturb and, where the Regional Manager considers necessary, kill game birds causing damage will be issued pursuant to relevant Sections 53, 54 & 56 of the Wildlife Act (1953) under the limitations of such delegations as may be made by the Minister of Conservation or the Director General and this Policy. Permits will detail when the permit can be used (and when it cannot), devices to be used and where, and expiry of permit, and maximum number of game birds by species that can be killed (if appropriate to situation).
 - When it is deemed necessary to kill game birds for the disturbance to be effective, the killing shall be carried out by the landowner or delegated person at the discretion of the landowner.
 - Staff may oversee the disturbance exercise but must advise the property owner accordingly.
 - Staff will conduct compliance inspections randomly or where some irregularity under the permit is suspected.
11. Property owners are required to provide a written report confirming the number of birds killed (if allowed in their permit).

12. Council staff will check compliance with permit conditions. Failure to provide correct information within the report may result in future permit applications being declined or a prosecution taken at the discretion of the Regional Manager.

GAME BIRDS DAMAGE COMPLAINT PROCESS





13 Feb 2026

New Zealand Fish and Game Council
By email

Dear Council

Response to consultation: Draft National Crop Depredation Policy

This letter is in response to recent consultation from NZFGC. It covers the topic of the draft Crop Depredation Policy.

Northland Fish and Game Council (NFGC) is supportive of having a national policy for management of game bird problems, but the draft in its current state is too narrow in scope and too prescriptive in its requirements to be suitable for all regions. There is also excessive detail in the document that is not relevant to all regions and is not required in a national policy.

The context in Northland region with regard to management of game bird issues is somewhat unique and requires a specific approach to find the balance between managing sustainable game bird populations for maximum hunter opportunity whilst supporting landowners to run their business, or otherwise enjoy their property without suffering losses, damage or nuisance at the hands of game birds. NFGC receives a high volume of game bird related complaints. Over the year 2025-26 NFGC issued 104 permits for game bird disturbance, mostly for paradise shelduck, black swan and pūkeko. In order to handle these high complaint numbers effectively, a national policy needs to include the flexibility for regions to adopt a tailored approach to each complaint to ensure that:

- 1) The complaint is resolved effectively
- 2) The game bird population in the area is not negatively impacted in a way that would detract from population sustainability or hunter opportunity during gazetted hunting seasons
- 3) Staff resources are not overstretched or directed away from other important outputs.

At their meeting on 12 Feb 2026 NFGC considered the policy and produced the following feedback points on the policy:

- 1) **Policy Scope:** The current authorisation from Department of Conservation (DOC) for Fish and Game is for section 53 of the Wildlife Act 1953. This gives regions the authorisation to catch alive or kill game “for any purpose”. This is a

Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, game birds and their habitats

Northland Region

Unit A5, 7-11 Nell Place, Raumanga, Whangarei

Telephone (09) 438 4135

www.fishandgame.org.nz

very liberal authorisation and the policy should reflect this, rather than limiting regions to crop depredation.

- a. **Recommendation:** remove all reference to crop depredation and replace with gamebirds causing damage and/or nuisance. Whilst crop damage is the source of most complaints, regional Fish and Game staff need the flexibility to deal with all issues caused by game birds. Some recent examples from Northland are pūkeko damaging a community garden, destroying wetland restoration plantings and picking holes in silage bale wrapping, and a pheasant continually fighting its own reflection on a house ranch slider door.
- 2) **Policy Scope:** The policy states that a permit is to be issued to a landowner for all disturbance activity that handles or harms birds, or where firearms are used. The authorisation from DOC to Fish and Game Councils is to “catch alive or kill”. By the Wildlife Act definition, the term “hunt or kill” includes hunting, killing, taking, trapping, capturing, pursuing, disturbing and molesting. The interpretation of what requires a permit needs to be extended to all “hunt or kill” activities, not just handling or harming birds or using firearms.
 - a. **Recommendation:** Amend the policy to state that ALL disturbance activity under the “hunt or kill” definition requires a permit under the current authorisation, not just those activities that require handling or harming of game.
 - 3) **Structure:** The policy is lengthy and written like an information brochure in some parts. As a policy that regions should adopt and follow it needs to be direct, succinct yet broad enough to allow regions flexibility to manage their issues how they see fit, within the bounds of the law and the DOC authorisation. The sections “Procedures for addressing crop depredation”, “Species” and “Susceptible crops” are not necessary.
 - a. **Recommendation:** Draft the policy in a more succinct format and remove passages that are unnecessary.
 - 4) **Methods for dispersing game birds:** Some of these methods are not practical.
 - a. **Method 4** breaches the Northland Regional Plan in that oil may not be burnt and is likely to result in an unauthorised discharge to air. Game bird nuisance issues coincide with peak fire season so burning is not recommended as a means to manage game bird problems.
 - b. **Method 10** diversionary feeding areas are not practical. It is unreasonable to expect a farmer or grower to invest into a sacrificial crop for ducks to eat.
 - c. **Recommendation:** Remove Methods 4 and 10.
 - 5) **Fish and Game response to birds causing damage:** This should be best practice guidance not hard policy. It should also be made clear that regional managers have the discretion to default to a cull permit immediately where circumstances dictate. An example is pūkeko in lifestyle block areas. Noisy disturbance is not practical and discrete shooting is warranted.

- a. **Number 2.** It is not practical for regions with high levels of complaints to investigate every complaint. Complaints are often from the same property's year-on-year. These properties are familiar with the process and do not need investigation or further advice.
- b. **Recommendation:** Include this point in "best practice/guidelines" but do not make it mandatory for every complaint.
- c. **Number 4.** Having regions fill out an assessment form which is then returned to the landowner to sign is unnecessary, the permit that is drafted is sufficient to include the details of the issue.
- d. **Recommendation:** Remove this requirement from the draft policy.
- e. **Number 9.** Regions do not have the capacity to have staff undertaking or supervising disturbance activities in high-volume areas.
- f. **Recommendation:** Remove this requirement from the draft policy.
- g. **Number 11.** This should be able to be communicated by telephone or text as well.
- h. **Recommendation:** Amend this requirement to allow for telephone/text/email reporting.

Overall, the policy is too long and wordy for a national policy that must have inherent flexibility for regions to operate within. A suggested structure is:

- 1) **Introduction**
- 2) **Purpose** – "to nationally coordinate the mitigation of game bird effects on agriculture and people without compromising the sustainability of game bird populations and the experience of hunters during gazetted seasons" or something similar.
- 3) **Legislative framework** – The sections of the Wildlife Act covered under the policy, what is currently authorised by DOC, what issues regions can address under the authorisation (i.e. crop damage, nuisance birds, property damage) and what measures may be applied (trapping, culling, disturbing etc)
- 4) **Principles** – vigilance, responsiveness, minimising of culling, moving toward developing self-sufficiency for landowners
- 5) **Guidelines/Best practice** – receive complaint, investigate (without enforcing property visits), provide disturbance advice, deliver training (if required) and permit, escalate to cull if disturbance unsuccessful. This must be flexible so that regions are not beholden to work that they cannot resource such as a property visit for every complaint and the supervision of the execution of every permit issued.

- 6) **Requirements** – This is where firm and enforceable requirements would be included. Some examples could be:
- a. A mandated response time i.e. 48 hours to have a permit issued
 - b. All disturbance and killing activities must be accompanied by a permit
 - c. Regions must get a report from all cull permit holders within two weeks of permit termination date for data collection
 - d. Regions must keep records of permits issued and cull returns
 - e. Cull limitations i.e. 10% of birds present at most recent count)

This consultation feedback from NFGC is designed to assist NZFGC in creating a policy that is practical and supports the regions to manage their complaints effectively within their context.

Sincerely,



Phil Durham
Chairman
Northland Fish and Game Council



16 February 2026
 Barrie Barnes
 New Zealand Fish and Game Council
 By email: nzcouncil@fishandgame.org.nz
 Cc: rcosgrove@fishandgame.org.nz

Dear Barrie

Re: Auckland Waikato Fish and Game Council Feedback on Draft Crop Depredation Policy.

This letter follows our earlier preliminary correspondence on the draft Crop Depredation Policy. At that time Council had only a brief discussion at a special meeting where the matter was not formally on the agenda. The meeting held on 14 February was therefore the first opportunity for Council to properly consider the draft policy and provide a comprehensive response. The following position reflects that full consideration.

Auckland Waikato Fish and Game Council has considered the draft Crop Depredation Policy and supporting material and provides the following feedback.

The Council does not support the draft policy in its current form.

In our view, the document conflates governance level policy with operational prescription. This creates unnecessary complexity, ambiguity around what is mandatory, and potential legal, financial, and resourcing risk for regions responsible for implementation. The draft requires substantial restructuring before it could be endorsed.

A fundamental concern is the lack of clarity between mandatory provisions and advisory guidance. Where requirements appear to be mandatory, the associated operational, staffing, financial, and legal implications for regions are not identified or assessed. It is Council's understanding that the draft policy is based on an approach used in the Central South Island, which issued only a small number of permits last year. The issue of scale has therefore not been adequately considered, and the absence of an implementation impact assessment is a significant omission in the current proposal.

The draft also reflects limited consideration of differences in regional operating environments and species prevalence. In Auckland Waikato, species such as pukeko form the majority of permit requests. In 2025 alone, 107 pukeko cull permits were issued in this region. Despite this, pukeko are not meaningfully addressed in the draft policy. Paradise shelduck and black swan also generate sustained agricultural impacts in this region and require flexibility in management settings.

The proposal for mandatory site visits and increased oversight is not supported. In a region issuing more than 100 permits per annum for a single species, a mandatory site visit model would impose significant travel and staffing costs without demonstrable benefit. It would slow response times and undermine the timeliness that is critical in crop depredation situations.

Council also considers it imperative that farmer feedback is given appropriate weight in any reform of the permit system. As NZC is aware following the situation in Southland, maintaining constructive

Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, gamebirds and their habitats.

Auckland/Waikato Region

156 Brymer Rd, RD 9, Hamilton 3289, New Zealand. Telephone (07) 849 1666
 Email: aucklandwaikato@fishandgame.org.nz www.fishandgame.org.nz

relationships with landowners and ensuring confidence in our processes is critical to achieving good outcomes. If landowners perceive the system as impractical or unresponsive, compliance risks increase and the broader credibility of Fish and Game is undermined.

Permit holder feedback reinforces this position. Auckland Waikato surveyed all permit holders from the previous year and 41 respondents provided feedback. The responses demonstrate strong support for the current permit process, with most describing it as fast, streamlined, simple, and efficient. A significant number explicitly stated there was no need to change a system that is already working effectively.

A dominant concern raised by respondents was that mandatory site visits and direct Fish and Game oversight would make the process slower, more costly, and less practical. Travel time and coordination requirements were viewed as disproportionate to the typical scale of permits, particularly where only small numbers of birds were approved for culling. Several respondents indicated that if access to permits became more difficult, control would likely continue outside the formal permit system, reducing compliance and oversight.

Timing was consistently identified as critical. Damage from problem birds can occur rapidly, and respondents emphasised that the effectiveness of the system relies on a timely response. Any increase in processing time was seen as likely to increase crop and pasture losses and reduce the perceived value of applying for permits.

The draft flow chart and response plan are also problematic. They do not clearly align with each other, and it is unclear whether either is intended to be mandatory. They do not adequately account for situations where control during the game bird season is not lawful or practical, such as in residential or peri urban environments where firearms cannot be used.

The draft further fails to adequately recognise situations where the risk of not addressing bird damage, including food safety or pasture loss, may exceed the risk associated with removing birds. A rigid framework that does not allow regional judgement in such circumstances is not appropriate.

By focusing solely on crop depredation, the policy also fails to address other instances where permits to cull or disturb game birds are required. Examples include airports where birds pose aviation safety risks, factories where birds cause nuisance and contamination issues, wastewater treatment plants where botulism management may necessitate intervention, feed bunkers where bird activity can create biosecurity and feed contamination risks, and potential avian influenza management scenarios where rapid response and regional discretion may be essential. A policy framework that is too narrowly framed around crop depredation does not adequately reflect the broader range of circumstances in which Fish and Game is required to issue permits in the public interest.

Mandatory follow up requirements are not supported as a default setting. In regions operating at scale, additional mandatory administrative contact will increase workload without necessarily improving compliance outcomes. A risk based, discretionary approach would be more proportionate.

The Council also notes that the draft does not provide an efficient pathway for trusted operators or landowners with recurring issues. A graduated model recognising compliance history would be more effective than uniform additional process requirements.

Under the current Department of Conservation delegation, permit holders are already required to report on how permits are exercised. Strengthening compliance mechanisms around reporting, and linking performance to future eligibility, would be a more targeted and practical improvement than introducing additional up-front mandatory controls.

Auckland Waikato Fish and Game Council supports the development of consistent national permit templates and standardised landowner advice material. These tools would improve consistency and messaging across regions without imposing unnecessary operational constraints.

Beyond that, the Council does not support the policy as drafted. A substantial redraft is required. Any revised document should clearly distinguish governance principles from operational guidance, provide an assessment of implementation implications, and explicitly allow regional discretion based on species, scale, risk context, and local operating environments.

We would expect meaningful engagement with regional operational staff before any revised draft is presented for approval. Given the operational complexity and variation across regions, it is important that those responsible for administering permits are directly involved in shaping the framework.

Auckland Waikato staff are prepared to work collaboratively with other regional operational staff and NZC to develop a redrafted version of the policy that reflects practical experience, regional scale, and the full range of permitting circumstances encountered nationally.

Yours sincerely



Nigel Juby
Chair
Auckland Waikato Fish and Game Council



David Klee
Chief Executive
Auckland Waikato Fish & Game Council



16 February 2026

Barrie Barnes
Chairperson
New Zealand Fish and Game Council

By email

Requested Feedback

Dear Barrie

Following Eastern Fish and Game Council's meeting on Thursday 12 February 2026, please find below our Councils feedback on the requested papers and in general.

Eastern Fish and Game Council is concerned and disappointed with the lack of meaningful engagement and consultation from NZC when putting together draft policies and operational plans.

NZC seems to be working in a silo environment and not connecting with the regions to facilitate a constructive working plan to gather feedback and input when creating operational plans and policies. The 3 papers below are an example of a lack of using our own specialist staff at the outset to get a clear picture of what has been done previously, what is practical and an appreciation of variance based on regions unique environments and resources.

We ask that NZC takes more time to discuss, engage and structure operational plans and policy foundations that have operational impacts with the regions and any specialist staff at the outset, this will save time, money and help to build an organisation that works together and fulfills NZC's coordination role.

Draft NZ Crop Depredation

12.3 Agreed (Kevin Coutts/Murray Ferris) that Council requests that NZC engage and receive input from specialist staff around the Country to create a practical and workable policy and operational guidelines that meet the legislative requirement and is able to be used and implemented nationally. [26/02/12.3]



16 February 2026

NZ Fish and Game Council

Feedback on Consultation on Draft Crop Depredation Policy

Taranaki Fish and Game Council considered the draft Crop Depredation Policy at its meeting on 14 February 2026.

Taranaki Council considers that, in its current form, the draft Crop Depredation Policy to be overly prescriptive in its attempt to achieve consistency, and there needs to further consideration to ensure actions are practical and effective in implementation.

The following observations were made:

1. The policy assumes that delegations under sections 53, 54, and 56 from the Director-General of Conservation have been granted. While anticipated, this is not yet confirmed and may have implications for the legality of Fish and Game's responses.
2. The level of detail currently included in the policy would be more appropriately placed in an operational procedures document.
3. Operational staff could be asked to review the draft procedures to assess their practicality, level of detail, and suitability for implementation.
4. Further analysis is needed to understand why approaches differ across regions.
5. The procedures document should be adaptable and capable of being updated as required. It must also be practical in application.
6. Council found the decision-making tree to be a useful tool for illustrating response pathways. However, it should be tested against real-world scenarios to ensure responses are timely, particularly where urgent action is required.
7. Procedures should be clear and accessible to new staff entering the role.
8. The level of flexibility within the procedures should be clarified, including the risks associated with requiring strict adherence.
9. All procedures must comply with legal obligations and ethical standards.

Taranaki Fish and Game Council

PO Box 662, New Plymouth 4340

taranaki@fishandgame.org.nz

10. Council noted that landowners often contact Fish and Game when impacts are already significant and time-sensitive. The framework must therefore enable pragmatic and timely responses while maintaining transparency and consistency. An overly prescriptive model may unduly limit staff discretion in situations requiring context-specific judgement.
11. While Council supports greater consistency across regions, this should not come at the expense of some flexibility where alternative approaches are demonstrably effective and timely.

In summary, Taranaki Council considered that, in the first instance, separating the document into two components would provide greater clarity:

- A **policy** document focused on governance; and
- An **Operating Procedures** document focused on operational delivery.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft policy.

Yours sincerely



Chris Donald

Chairman



13 February 2026

NZ Fish and Game Council

Feedback on Consultation on Draft Crop Depredation Policy

Wellington Council considers that, in its current form, the draft Crop Depredation Policy to be overly prescriptive in its attempt to achieve consistency.

Council recommends separating the document into two components:

- A **policy** document focused on governance; and
- **Operating procedures** document focused on operational delivery.

The Policy should not attempt to prescribe operational solutions. Instead, it should define the risk framework, outline the principles to define appropriate levels of response, and provide assurance that desired outcomes are being achieved. It may refer to 'standard operational procedures' but this would be developed with an operational focus.

Operational procedures should remain flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances, including population fluctuations, shifting risk priorities, and evolving technologies or management approaches. Further work is required to determine whether greater flexibility in managing complaints is possible, or whether a more prescriptive approach is necessary to achieve consistent outcomes.

Council also discussed the practical realities of responding to landowner complaints. Complaints often arise in urgent situations and must be addressed promptly and pragmatically. Responses should consider both the individual context (e.g. recurrence

and timing) and the regional context, including existing procedures suited to local circumstances.

Council therefore seeks a clear separation between the policy and operating procedures, along with a request for further operational input to confirm what responses are currently effective and whether they are feasible across all situations.

Strict adherence to the draft policy, as currently framed, may place an undue burden on regional staff and could impact the delivery of higher-priority projects and statutory outputs.

We have included a draft policy with a governance focus to promote discussion - and that could be further adapted and refined if that approach had merits.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft policy.

Yours sincerely



Paul Dewar

Chairman



9th February 2026

By email: rcosgrove@fishandgame.org.nz

Richard Cosgrove

Chief Operating Officer

New Zealand Fish & Game Council

Dear Richard:

Request for regional feedback:

Draft crop depredation policy: due to the short consultation timeframe, the response deadline occurred before our next in-person council meeting. As a result, staff reviewed the matters requiring regional council feedback and prepared a draft response, which was then circulated to regional Governors for input and incorporated into this final submission. Ideally, if regional operational staff had been involved earlier in developing the draft crop depredation policy, the document would be more fit for purpose and would have required less time from both staff and Governors.

The draft crop depredation policy contains excessive detail on methodology and reads more like a standard operating procedure than a high-level policy document. We recommend that NZC develop a concise national policy, no longer than two pages, that acknowledges regional differences and requires each region to develop or review its own crop depredation policy based on core principles outlined in the final NZC policy. NZC staff could then review regional policies for compliance. Our current regional crop depredation policy is **attached** for your consideration.

NZC should recognise that regional differences require varied approaches to crop depredation, influenced by species, geography, and resources. The effectiveness of these approaches is best measured by the number of complaints received, rather than applying a uniform policy nationwide. The Nelson - Marlborough region has received no complaints from landowners or hunters regarding our administration of approximately 50 crop depredation permits per year, mainly for pukeko and paradise shelduck, over the past two decades. We believe the proposed national approach will likely generate complaints from regional landowners and require significant additional unbudgeted staff time, contrary to the goal of improving efficiency.

Decision-making on crop depredation issues should remain with regional staff, provided they adhere to agreed principles in the final NZC policy. These principles could include objectives such as *maintaining positive landowner relationships while supporting licence holders*. Regional staff are best placed to assess

local gamebird populations, the impact on livelihoods, and the most effective responses. In our view, the current NZC approach is addressing a problem that does not exist in this region and is creating unnecessary demands on staff time, with future budget implications.

Nelson-Marlborough staff believe that enforcing the current draft NZC crop depredation policy will erode landowner goodwill and may lead to the use of illegal methods to control parry damage to crops.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Owen Baigent".

Owen Baigent, Nelson Marlborough Fish & Game Council Chairman

CC Bill Oleary NZC rep



12 February 2026

The Chair
New Zealand Fish and Game Council
PO Box 25055
Wellington, 6146

Dear NZ Council,

At the February meeting of the West Coast Fish and Game Council it was resolved to replace the current NZ Council appointee (Sam Speight) and appoint Peter Bayliss. Can you please make staff aware of this for meeting and correspondence arrangements;

Motion proposed: That the Council agrees to revoke Sam Speight as the NZC appointee and nominate Peter Bayliss as the NZC appointee.

Proposer: P Bayliss **Seconder:** S Speight **Outcome:** Carried

The proposed Crop Depredation National Policy was also reviewed with the following resolution by Council;

Motion proposed: That the Council will write to the NZC requesting that the requirement to visit the site be discretionary and that it be stated in the policy that permit issue will be at the discretion of Management having considered potential impact on hunter opportunities.

Proposer: J Derks **Seconder:** R Roney **Outcome:** Carried

Regards

Dean Kelly
Manager – on behalf of
West Coast Fish and Game Council





17 February 2026

New Zealand Fish & Game Council

Via Email; COO - rcosgrove@fishandgame.org.nz

Re; Feedback on National Policy – Gamebirds causing damage

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft National Crop Depredation Policy.

Otago Fish and Game Council has considered both the draft policy and the accompanying background material.

Council supports the intent of establishing a nationally consistent framework. However, it remains of the view that any national policy must clearly distinguish between policy, procedure, and operational guidance, and must provide clear statutory and governance “rails” rather than detailed methods.

Council’s view is that the original draft would have benefited from earlier engagement with operational staff across regions. A small working group of Regional Managers and staff who regularly administer crop depredation permits would likely have strengthened the policy, improved practicality, and reduced legal and operational risk.

At Council’s request, we have drafted an alternative, significantly shortened policy for consideration. This version reflects how Otago currently manages crop depredation while recognising that operational contexts vary between regions. It is offered as a contribution to the national discussion rather than as a prescriptive model for adoption.

A key feature of the Otago approach, and one we consider important from both a legal and risk perspective, is the explicit two-step escalation framework:

1. Disturbance (non-lethal) as the default first response, supported by advice and, where required, a permit to disturb under section 54 of the Wildlife Act 1953; and
2. Permits to kill considered only after verification of ongoing damage and demonstrated failure of non-lethal measures, with clear limits, conditions, and reporting.

Council's view is that this approach better reflects the statutory test under section 54 of the Wildlife Act, which requires the Director-General to be satisfied that injury or damage is occurring. In our view, that obligation logically extends to those exercising delegated authority on the Director-General's behalf. Issuing permits to kill without verification that damage is occurring and that lesser measures have been ineffective presents legal and reputational risk for the organisation.

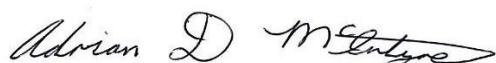
We acknowledge that some regions currently operate differently, including issuing permits to kill without inspection in certain circumstances. While we understand the practical drivers behind that, Otago Council's position is that a national policy should set a clear, defensible standard that aligns with the statutory threshold and supports consistent, auditable decision-making.

The attached draft policy (Appendix A) is deliberately principle-based and underpinned by:

- Clear reference to the Wildlife Act 1953
- A structured two-step response model
- Explicit recognition of animal welfare obligations
- Clear permit, accountability, and monitoring expectations
- Separation of policy from operational methods, which are better addressed through SOPs and guidance

We offer this as a basis for further refinement through national collaboration. Otago Council would support the establishment of a small cross-regional working group to help finalise a policy that is both legally robust and operationally workable across the country.

Yours sincerely



Adrian McIntyre
Chair
Otago Fish and Game Council

Appendix 1

National Fish and Game Policy - Crop Depredation

1. Purpose

This policy establishes a consistent, lawful, and proportionate framework for responding to damage to crops and pasture caused by game birds. It provides clear decision-making principles, statutory boundaries, and escalation thresholds, while ensuring that responses balance landowner interests, animal welfare, and Fish and Game's statutory responsibility to manage game bird populations for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Regional Fish and Game Councils
- All Fish and Game staff involved in responding to crop depredation complaints
- All permits issued by Fish and Game relating to disturbance or killing of game birds causing damage

This policy applies only to game bird species managed by Fish and Game under the Wildlife Act 1953. Damage caused by non-game species falls outside this policy and must be managed under relevant alternative statutory frameworks.

3. Statutory Authority

This policy is made under the authority of the Wildlife Act 1953, including but not limited to sections 53, 54, and 56, and any delegations or authorisations issued by the Minister of Conservation or the Director-General of Conservation.

Nothing in this policy limits or overrides statutory requirements under:

- The Wildlife Act 1953
- The Animal Welfare Act 1999
- Relevant health and safety, firearms, and environmental legislation

4. Policy Principles

Fish and Game responses to crop depredation shall be guided by the following principles:

1. **Early Intervention**
Early engagement and action are critical to preventing escalation of damage.
2. **Proportionality**
Responses must be proportionate to the scale, duration, and severity of damage.
3. **Non-lethal First**
Non-lethal disturbance is the preferred and primary response.
4. **Escalation Only When Necessary**
Lethal control may be authorised only where non-lethal methods have demonstrably failed.
5. **Animal Welfare**
All authorised actions must minimise suffering and comply with animal welfare standards.
6. **Consistency and Accountability**
Decisions must be consistent, documented, and defensible.
7. **Shared Responsibility**
Landowners retain responsibility for ongoing crop protection, supported by Fish and Game advice and oversight.

5. Two-Step Response Framework

Step 1 – Disturbance (Non-Lethal)

Where a landowner reports crop or pasture damage by game birds, Fish and Game shall:

- Assess the complaint to confirm that damage is occurring or imminent.
- Make a site visit if considered necessary
- Provide advice on appropriate non-lethal disturbance methods
- Where required, issue a permit to disturb under section 54 of the Wildlife Act 1953

If the complaint falls inside the hunting season, the first remedial action recommended will be hunting by licence holding gamebird hunters. Daily bag limits for the region will apply. Disturbance permits may authorise activities including, but not limited to, scaring with gas guns or other firearms, human activity, or other non-lethal methods. Disturbance (when outside of the gamebird season) is the default and expected first response.

Step 2 – Escalation to Lethal Control

A permit to kill game birds may be considered only where all of the following criteria are met:

- A site visit or equivalent verification has confirmed the ongoing damage
- Non-lethal disturbance has been implemented and has demonstrably failed
- The proposed killing is necessary to achieve effective dispersal
- The scale of killing is proportionate to the issue
- The action complies with animal welfare requirements
- If inside the hunting season, where hunting cannot be undertaken in the first instance (ie urban area)

Permits to kill shall specify:

- Species and maximum numbers
- Timeframes and locations
- Approved methods
- Reporting requirements

Permits to kill are discretionary and not automatic.

6. Permits and Conditions

All permits issued under this policy shall:

- Be issued under the appropriate section(s) of the Wildlife Act 1953
- Include standard conditions set by Fish and Game
- Be time-limited and purpose-specific
- Require post-activity reporting by the permit holder

Fish and Game may decline, restrict, or revoke permits where conditions are not met or where risks outweigh benefits.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- Fish and Game Councils set policy direction and ensure consistency
- Regional Managers (or delegated staff) are responsible for permit decisions, compliance, and oversight
- Landowners are responsible for implementing approved measures and complying with permit conditions

8. Compliance and Monitoring

Fish and Game shall:

- Monitor compliance with permit conditions
- Maintain records of permits issued and outcomes
- Take enforcement action where breaches occur, including declining future permits or pursuing prosecution where appropriate

9. Conflict Resolution

Where disputes arise regarding damage assessments or permit decisions, Fish and Game will:

- Engage with affected parties in good faith
- Seek practical resolution consistent with this policy
- Escalate unresolved matters internally in accordance with delegated authority

10. Review

This policy shall be reviewed periodically to ensure:

- Ongoing legal compliance
- Consistency across regions
- Alignment with best practice and operational experience
- Compliance with any legislation change

Note:

Operational procedures, disturbance methods, permit templates, and guidance material shall be maintained separately from this policy.

11. Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Permit to disturb

Appendix B – Draft Permit to Kill

Appendix C – DG's delegation to F&G Councils



12 February 2026

New Zealand Fish & Game Council
PO BOX 25 055
WELLINGTON

Draft Crop Depredation Policy - Feedback and Requested Amendments
from Central South Island Fish & Game Council

1. Purpose of this Feedback

The Central South Island Fish & Game Council (CSIFGC) discussed the Draft Crop Depredation Policy at its 5th February 2026 Council meeting and provides the following feedback to assist NZC in finalising the Policy. Our aim is to support a policy that:

- clearly defines the role of Regional Fish & Game Councils,
- maintains an advisory and authorising focus, and
- ensures any operational involvement occurs only when explicitly contracted and fully cost-recovered.

2. CSIFGC Position (Summary)

- Councils should not be required to own, maintain, or provide crop-protection equipment (e.g., gas guns, lasers).
- The default Council role should be advisory and authorising, including issuing disturbance or lethal-take permits and ensuring compliance with the Wildlife Act.
- Execution of non-lethal or lethal activities must rest with landholders or their contractors, not Council staff.
- Non-lethal measures should be the primary approach; lethal control should be authorised only where non-lethal methods have been applied and proven ineffective.
- Any on-farm support from Council staff must occur only under a separate agreement, with clear health and safety responsibilities and full cost recovery.

3. Key Feedback and Requested Policy Amendments

3.1 Role Clarity

We ask NZC to amend any wording implying that Council staff will undertake or directly oversee disturbance activities. Preferred wording:

“Council staff provide advice and authorisations. Responsibility for carrying out disturbance or lethal control lies with the landholder or their contracted provider.”

Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, gamebirds and their habitats.

Central South Island Region

32 Richard Pearse Drive, Temuka 7920, PO Box 150 Temuka 7958. Telephone (03) 615 8400
Email: csi@fishandgame.org.nz www.fishandgame.org.nz

3.2 Equipment Ownership and Supply

The draft policy currently implies an obligation for Councils to maintain equipment for loan or rental. CSIFGC requests the following amendment:

“Regional Fish & Game Councils are not required to own or maintain crop-protection equipment. Councils may, at their discretion, provide information on commercial suppliers or hire options. Any equipment supplied by a Council is subject to availability and full cost recovery, and no obligation to supply exists.”

3.3 First-Time Cases

Where the draft policy states that a “demonstration will be given,” CSIFGC recommends replacing this with:

“Guidance will be provided through factsheets, checklists, or online resources. On-site demonstrations may be offered where resourcing allows.”

3.4 Permitting and Reporting

We support a clear hierarchy:

1. Issue disturbance permits first, and
2. Authorise lethal control only where necessary and compliant with Wildlife Act authorities.

We request inclusion of a simple, standardised reporting requirement (numbers by species, provided within a specified timeframe) to support national reporting to the Director-General.

3.5 Service-Level Expectations

To manage stakeholder expectations and workload, CSIFGC recommends the policy specify:

- acknowledgement/triage of enquiries within two working days,
- one scheduled follow-up, and
- further support provided through guidance materials or contracted delivery rather than routine on-farm involvement by Council staff.

4. Targeted Drafting for NZC to Insert Operational Role

“Council staff may provide advice and authorisations. Execution of disturbance or lethal control activities rests with the landholder or their contractor. Council field involvement occurs only where separately contracted and cost-recovered.”

Equipment

“Councils are not required to own or maintain crop-protection equipment. Councils may facilitate access to commercial suppliers or hire options. Any Council-provided equipment is subject to availability and full cost recovery.”

General Feedback

There seems to be some confusion or indication within the flow chart that an authorization may not be needed for non-lethal disturbance. This is not the case; all disturbance requires authorization.

The Title of the policy should not be “Crop” related. We have received requests for permits for gamebirds being a issue at bowling green, botantic gardens, footpaths,

airports, sewage treatment facilities etc. A better name would be for addressing Gamebirds causing damage or nuisance.

We should not be permitting hunting (ie using decoys or calling under this policy). The act defines hunting as any disturbance of wildlife.

5. **CSIFGC Recommendations to NZC**

CSIFGC recommends that NZC:

- 1. Adopt an advisory/authorising-based model for crop-depredation management across all regions.**
- 2. Amend the draft policy consistent with the CSIFGC feedback and wording recommendations above.**
- 3. Remove any implied or explicit obligation for Councils to own or maintain equipment.**
- 4. Implement a national standard permit and reporting template.**

Yours faithfully



Steve McKnight
Chief Executive

FISH AND GAME RESPONSE TO GAME BIRDS CAUSING DAMAGE

Fish and Game Staff will, upon receiving a complaint of game birds causing damage, respond in the following way:

1. An application will be provided to a landholder seeking assistance to disturb game birds that are causing damage to crops. Such application may only be made by the landholder or leaseholder of the property concerned.

Commented [MG1]: Redundant with first conversation with the landowner.

2. Staff will investigate the complaint to confirm that it is valid and, respond to the affected landholder and provide advice on the best course of action to mitigate the problem, including authorizing disturbance, at the Regional Manager's discretion.

Commented [MG2]: Unclear to me what "confirm that it is valid" means.

3. We will telephone the land owner and discuss the case and ask the following information for our investigation: This will include the location of the property affected, the number and species of gamebirds causing the damage, the crop or property being damaged, the name of the landholder or leaseholder, and the name(s) of the people to be authorized by either the permit holder or Fish and Game staff to undertake disturbance.

Commented [MG3]: This happens at first contact with the landowner (they generally call asking for a permit, and happens as step 1.). I would not call it an "investigation", it is gathering information which is being responded to (address, landowner name, species causing damage and to what crop, number involved). A conversation would be had with them at this point about what a permit would look like (if it is deemed appropriate). The next contact with the landowner will be sending a pdf of the permit with all the relevant information.

4. The completed assessment and the terms and conditions of the draft permit will be provided to the applicant for verification and signature to confirm agreement. On receipt of the signed assessment and agreement to the terms and conditions of the draft permit from the applicant, Fish and Game will issue the permit in a timely manner.

Commented [MG4]: A discussion over what the permit would look like would happen at first contact when the request is made.

5. All permits must be issued under s53, 54 and 56 as relevant. If the main activity is disturbance, the number of days that the permit is valid and when relevant the number of birds of each species that can be killed.

6. The Council will maintain devices to disperse game birds and mitigate the effects of crop damage. These will be available for loan or rental to properties affected by game birds.

Commented [MG5]: This is difficult to manage and takes a lot of time. I don't think it is necessarily appropriate to require this.

7. Property owners experiencing their first case of crop depredation by game birds will be instructed in methods to mitigate the adverse effects on their crops. A demonstration of techniques, including the loan of a scaring device, if available, will be given.

Commented [MG6]: Not wording I would advise (i.e. staff WILL come to do a demonstration). Generally a conversation on the phone is sufficient in providing advice.

8. All property owners who are affected by crop depredation will be encouraged to purchase devices as appropriate to mitigate damage in the future. The principle of self-determination will be encouraged for landholders seeking assistance following the initial demonstration and advice.

9. Permits to disturb will be issued pursuant to 54 of the Wildlife Act (1953) and under the limitations of this Policy.

- When Staff have verified that game birds are causing damage, they will decide on a course of action from within the disturbance only methods and advise the landholder.

• Staff will undertake or directly oversee the disturbance only exercises.

Commented [MG7]: Not reasonable given the amount of permits we write.

10. Permits to disturb and, where the Regional Manager considers necessary, kill game birds causing damage will be issued pursuant to relevant Sections 53, 54 & 56 of the Wildlife Act (1953) under the limitations of such delegations as may be made by the Minister of Conservation or the Director General and this Policy. Permits will detail when the permit can be used (and when it cannot), devices to be used and where, and expiry of permit, and maximum number of game birds by species that can be killed (if appropriate to situation).

- When it is deemed necessary to kill game birds for the disturbance to be effective, the killing shall be carried out by the landowner or delegated person at the discretion of the landowner.
- Staff may oversee the disturbance exercise but must advise the property owner accordingly.

• Staff will conduct compliance inspections randomly or where some irregularity under the permit is suspected.

Commented [MG8]: Another "will" statement that I would not include. My thoughts are compliance activities may be required if we are directed toward evidence of permit holders not following conditions. This doesn't preclude us from visiting properties as we deem necessary.

11. Property owners are required to provide a written report confirming the number of birds killed (if allowed in their permit).

12. Council staff will check compliance with permit conditions. Failure to provide correct information within the report may result in future permit applications being declined or a prosecution taken at the discretion of the Regional Manager.

Commented [MG9]: Don't like the wording of this - as said above we may in some form or another become aware of issues related to permit conditions not being followed, we will follow up in that instance. We won't however be going to every property to ensure birds have been properly disposed of, etc.

FISH AND GAME RESPONSE TO GAME BIRDS CAUSING DAMAGE

Fish and Game Staff will, upon receiving a complaint of game birds causing damage, respond in the following way:

- 1) Gather information from the landowner/leaseholder seeking a permit. This includes the address of the property, the species and number of birds involved, and the damage/nuisance that is occurring. Best practice is to request this information in an email.
- 2) Based on the nature of the information gathered, staff will assess whether a permit is required. Advice will be provided on disturbance of birds (non-lethal, and when deemed appropriate, lethal).
- 3) If required, issue a permit with conditions at the discretion of the Regional Manager under s53, 54 or 56 as relevant. The permit must include the dates it is valid and when relevant the number of birds of each species that can be killed.
- 4) When a permit is issued allowing lethal disturbance, a report is required from the permit holder on how many birds were killed.
- 5) Permit holders that do not comply with permit conditions may result in future permit requests being declined at the discretion of the Regional Manager.



20 February 2026

By email: rcosgrove@fishandgame.org.nz

Richard Cosgrove Chief

Operating Officer New Zealand Fish & Game Council

Dear Richard:

Feedback on Consultation on Draft Crop Depredation Policy

North Canterbury Fish and Game Council considered the draft Crop Depredation Policy. North Canterbury Council considers that, in its current form, the draft Crop Depredation Policy to be overly prescriptive as a policy document. The draft crop depredation policy contains excessive detail on methodology and acts as standard operating procedure rather than a high-level policy document. We recommend that NZC develop a concise national policy to provide high level guidance.

While considering this, North Canterbury Council has provided feedback on the proposed process for addressing crop depredation issues in the document. This section needs to be rewritten to better reflect the process staff would undertake in permitting

FISH AND GAME RESPONSE TO GAME BIRDS CAUSING DAMAGE

Fish and Game Staff will, upon receiving a complaint of game birds causing damage, respond in the following way:

1. An application will be provided to a landholder seeking assistance to disturb game birds that are causing damage to crops. Such application may only be made by the landholder or leaseholder of the property concerned.
 - Section is unnecessary and redundant with this step generally undertaken with an initial conversation with the landowner
2. Staff will investigate the complaint to confirm that it is valid and, respond to the affected landholder and provide advice on the best course of action to mitigate the problem, including authorizing disturbance, at the Regional Manager's discretion.
 - Unclear what "confirm that it is valid" refers to. Requires clarification.
3. We will telephone the land owner and discuss the case and ask the following information for our investigation: This will include the location of the property affected, the number and species of gamebirds causing the damage, the crop or property being damaged, the name of the landholder or leaseholder, and the name(s) of the people to be authorized by either the permit holder or Fish and Game staff to undertake disturbance.
 - This happens at first contact with the landowner (they generally call asking for a permit and happens as step 1.). Rather than "investigation", it is gathering information which

is being responded to (address, landowner name, species causing damage and to what crop, number involved). A conversation would be had with them at this point about what a permit would look like (if it is deemed appropriate). The next contact with the landowner will be sending a pdf of the permit with all the relevant information.

-

4. The completed assessment and the terms and conditions of the draft permit will be provided to the applicant for verification and signature to confirm agreement. On receipt of the signed assessment and agreement to the terms and conditions of the draft permit from the applicant, Fish and Game will issue the permit in a timely manner.

- This is not reasonable. A discussion over what the permit would look like would happen at first contact when the request is made.

5. All permits must be issued under s53, 54 and 56 as relevant. If the main activity is disturbance, the number of days that the permit is valid and when relevant the number of birds of each species that can be killed.

6. The Council will maintain devices to disperse game birds and mitigate the effects of crop damage. These will be available for loan or rental to properties affected by game birds.

- This would be difficult to manage and would be particularly time consuming. Remove as not necessary.

7. Property owners experiencing their first case of crop depredation by game birds will be instructed in methods to mitigate the adverse effects on their crops. A demonstration of techniques, including the loan of a scaring device, if available, will be given.

- Remove "will" statements. This unnecessarily requires staff to complete this action. Generally, a conversation on the phone is sufficient in providing advice.

8. All property owners who are affected by crop depredation will be encouraged to purchase devices as appropriate to mitigate damage in the future. The principle of self-determination will be encouraged for landholders seeking assistance following the initial demonstration and advice.

9. Permits to disturb will be issued pursuant to 54 of the Wildlife Act (1953) and under the limitations of this Policy.

- When Staff have verified that game birds are causing damage, they will decide on a course of action from within the disturbance only methods and advise the landholder.

- Staff will undertake or directly oversee the disturbance only exercises.

- Remove as this is not reasonable given the amount of permits we write.

10. Permits to disturb and, where the Regional Manager considers necessary, kill game birds causing damage will be issued pursuant to relevant Sections 53, 54 & 56 of the Wildlife Act (1953) under the limitations of such delegations as may be made by the Minister of Conservation or the Director General and this Policy. Permits will detail when the permit can be

used (and when it cannot), devices to be used and where, and expiry of permit, and maximum number of game birds by species that can be killed (if appropriate to situation).

- When it is deemed necessary to kill game birds for the disturbance to be effective, the killing shall be carried out by the landowner or delegated person at the discretion of the landowner.
- Staff may oversee the disturbance exercise but must advise the property owner accordingly.
- Staff will conduct compliance inspections randomly or where some irregularity under the permit is suspected.

As above, remove "will" statements. Compliance activities **may** be required if we are directed toward evidence of permit holders not following conditions. This doesn't preclude us from visiting properties as we deem necessary.


11. Property owners are required to provide a written report confirming the number of birds killed (if allowed in their permit).

12. Council staff will check compliance with permit conditions. Failure to provide correct information within the report may result in future permit applications being declined or a prosecution taken at the discretion of the Regional Manager.

As above we may in some form or another become aware of issues related to permit conditions not being followed, we will follow up in that instance.

Kind Regards

Alan Strong



Chairman

North Canterbury Fish and Game Council



NELSON MARLBOROUGH REGION

POLICY ON Crop Depredation Updated February 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game Council is charged with managing, maintaining and enhancing the game bird resource and the recreational interests of hunters. The Fish and Game Council does not have an overriding responsibility to ensure game birds do not predate crops. This falls to the Director General of Conservation and the Minister of Conservation.

Game birds like other wildlife are integral to New Zealand's countryside and add to the diversity of nature that most of us enjoy day to day.

Game birds are a valued game resource in Nelson-Marlborough with over 1000 people hunting them in the open season. Over 20 000 – 25 000 waterfowl are harvested by hunters each year. Birds are therefore an important natural, economic and recreational asset.

The Council will liase closely with the farming community in an effort to provide sufficient advice and, where practical, assistance to enable farmers to adequately control the depredation of crops by game birds.

It is generally the Councils wish to be as helpful and co operative as possible. Policy is one of helping farmers to help themselves towards self-determination. Council staff will

not undertake to loan gas guns or personally disperse game birds subsequent to the initial demonstration period.

RESPONSE TO CROP DEPREDATION

The Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game Council will respond to the notification of complaints in the following manner:

1. Investigate the complaint and respond to the affected landowner and advise the best course of action to mitigate the problem and including authorising dispersal, at the manager's discretion, within 24 hours, if possible.
2. The Council will maintain devices to disperse game birds and mitigate the effects of crop damage within its resources. These will be available for loan or rental to properties affected by game birds.
 - 2.1 Properties or property owners experiencing their **first** case of crop depredation by game birds will receive and be instructed in methods to mitigate the adverse effects on their crops. A demonstration of methods including the loan of a scaring device will be given, as they are available. (Direct running costs for the scaring device will fall to the land occupier).
 - 2.2 Where properties have received assistance in the past, scaring devices will be leased on a cost recovery basis to property owners on a second priority to property owners outlined in 2.1.
 - 2.3 All property owners who are affected by crop depredation will be encouraged to purchase devices as appropriate to mitigate damage in the future. The principle of self-determination will be followed for property owners receiving advice following the initial demonstration and advice.
3. Permits to disperse, and where the Manager or staff as delegated by the Manager's considers necessary, kill game birds, will be issued pursuant to Sections 53, 54 & 56 of the Wildlife Act under the limitations of such delegations as may be made by the Minister of Conservation.
4. A register of interested hunters will be maintained by Nelson Marlborough Fish & Game, including those with junior hunters, for response to crop depredation complaints.
5. Priority will be given to hunters supervising at least 1 junior, to respond to complaints on behalf of Nelson Marlborough Fish & Game. The guardian should not, in effect, carry out shooting simultaneously as the junior, as by law the junior hunter should be under direct supervision by the guardian.
6. **Access.** In providing assistance, the Council will be mindful of access policy of the property to hunt game birds by licenced hunters. Where the policy of the property affected is not to allow access to hunt game birds by licenced hunter, the property manager or owners will be encouraged to review their access policy. If there is a second occasion where the property requires assistance and the policy for access for game bird hunting has not changed, assistance may be declined, at the discretion of the Manager.

Reviewed February 2020, no changes made and next review 2027

Summary of Regional Feedback - Crop Depredation Policy

Region	Support / Oppose	Summary of Comment
Northland F&G	Support in principle but amendments recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft is too narrow in scope and too prescriptive to be suitable for all regions. • High volume of complaints received • Remove reference to crop depredation and replace with game birds causing damage or nuisance. • Amend the policy to state that ALL disturbance activity under the “hunt or kill” definition requires a permit under the current authorisation, not just those activities that require handling or harming of game. • Draft the policy in a more succinct format and remove passages that are unnecessary. • Remove Methods 4 and 10, number 2 often complaints are from the same property year on year and do not need investigation or further advice so can be in best practice or guidance, • Remove point 4 of form filling • Remove point 9 as not all regions have staff to supervise disturbance activities. • Suggested structure provided
AK Waikato F&G	Oppose draft policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft requires substantial restructuring before it could be endorsed. It is too complex, ambiguity around what is mandatory, and potential legal, financial, and resourcing risk for regions responsible for implementation. • The approach is based on an approach used in CSI which issues only a small number of permits last year • Absence of an implementation impact assessment is a significant omission in the current proposal. • AK Waikato have issues with different species eg Pukeko which are not meaningfully addressed in the policy. Paradise shelduck and black swan also generate sustained agricultural impacts in the region. • With the volume of permits issued, mandatory site visits would be without demonstratable benefit. • Ak Waikato surveyed all permit holders from the previous year and received 41 responses which noted support for current system, most describing it as fast, streamlined, simple and

		<p>efficient with no need to change a system that is already working effectively. They also note that mandatory site visits would make the process slower and more costly and less practical.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory follow up requirements are not supported as a default setting. • The Council also notes that the draft does not provide an efficient pathway for trusted operators or landowners with recurring issues. • Beyond that, the Council does not support the policy as drafted. A substantial redraft is required. Any revised document should clearly distinguish governance principles from operational guidance, provide an assessment of implementation implications, and explicitly allow regional discretion based on species, scale, risk context, and local operating environments. • We would expect meaningful engagement with regional operational staff before any revised draft is presented for approval.
Eastern Fish and Game	Oppose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Fish and Game Council is concerned and disappointed with the lack of meaningful engagement and consultation from NZC when putting together draft policies and operational plans. • Council requests that NZC engage and receive input from specialist staff around the country to create a practical and workable policy and operational guidelines that meet the legislative requirements and is able to be used and implemented nationally.
Taranaki Fish and Game	Oppose - overly prescriptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In summary, Taranaki and Wellington F&G Council considered that, in the first instance, separating the document into two components would provide greater clarity: A policy document focused on governance; and Operating Procedures document focused on operational delivery.
Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game	Oppose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft crop depredation policy contains excessive detail on methodology and reads more like a standard operating procedure than a high-level policy document. We recommend that NZC develop a concise national policy, no longer than two pages, that acknowledges regional differences and requires each region to develop or review its own crop depredation policy based on core principles outlined in the final NZC policy. • NZC should recognise that regional differences require varied approaches to crop depredation, influenced by species, geography, and resources. The effectiveness of these

		approaches is best measured by the number of complaints received, rather than applying a uniform policy nationwide.
West Coast Fish and Game	Support with amendment regarding site visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council will write to the NZC requesting that the requirement to visit the site be discretionary and that it be stated in the policy that permit issue will be at the discretion of Management having considered potential impact on hunter opportunities.

Section 53(4) authority to disturb or kill game birds causing risk or damage to people or property

Pursuant to an authority from the Director-General of Conservation under section 53 of the Wildlife Act 1953, and pursuant to section 53(4) of the Wildlife Act (in relation to the Fish and Game Council authorising other persons in writing), the [Name of region] Fish and Game Council authorises –

[Name of landowner or other party]
[Address of landowner or other party]

to –

disturb	<i>Remove non-applicable items as required.</i>
kill	Important:
catch alive	<i>Additional activities not listed in Schedule 1, Item 1, of the</i>
liberate	<i>authorisation from DOC (dated 21 December 2018) may not</i>
take eggs of	<i>be authorised by Fish and Game Councils. Note: the activity</i>
destroy eggs of	<i>“hunt” in the DOC authorisation includes “disturbing”</i>
<i>birds.</i>	

game birds within the following area –

[Name/description of property where control is to take place].

This authority is subject to the following conditions:

... *Add any necessary conditions.*

...

This authority commences on [date] and ends on [date] inclusive.

.....
/

Date /

[Name of FGC Manager]
Manager
[Name of region] Fish and Game Council

Resource Management Policy

FOR DECISION

New Zealand Fish and Game Council Meeting 180 28 & 29 March 2026

Prepared by: Helen Brosnan, Senior Policy Advisor, NZ Fish and Game Council

Kōrero taunaki - Summary of considerations

Purpose

1. This report provides NZC with the Resource Management Funding Policy which you considered at meeting 173 on 26 & 28 February 2025.

Financial Considerations

- Nil Budgetary provision Unbudgeted

Risk

- Low Medium High Extreme

Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations

2. NZC issued the draft Resource Management Fund Policy at meeting 173, for consultation and now we recommend that you:
 - a) **Approve** the Resource Management Policy

Whakarāpopoto - Executive Summary

3. The Resource Management Policy sets out criteria for applications to the National Legislation Fund (RM fund), and their consideration for approval along with ongoing case reporting conditions.
4. These requirements are summarised:
 - a) the application must be provided in the prescribed form;
 - b) If a decision is needed urgently, a workshop can be held and a decision recommended, to be confirmed at the next NZC meeting;
 - c) Case theory and case plan along with communications and engagement plan are to be provided to NZC for review and approval with the application;
 - d) The Council that applied for funds will report back to NZC at least twice annually on implementation of the case theory and any changes to the case that is predicted to arise through for example presentation of evidence, expert conferencing, mediation, or decisions.

- e) The Council that applied for funds will also report at least two annually on milestones and expenditure against budget.
- f) At the end of the process, key learnings from the case will be presented to NZC and the RM team along with the decision and other key documents;
- g) Unused funds must be returned to the advocacy fund.

Kōrerorero – Discussion

Resource Management Policy

5. Fish & Game has statutory functions under the Conservation Act 1987 to advocate on behalf of hunters and anglers including their interest in the habitats of sportsfish and gamebirds.

Section 26C Functions of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council

- a) *The functions of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council shall be—*
 - (g) *to advocate generally and in any statutory planning process the interests of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council and, with its agreement, of any Fish and Game Council in the management of sports fish and game, and habitats*

Section 26Q Functions of Fish and Game Councils

- (1) *The functions of each Fish and Game Council shall be to manage, maintain, and enhance the sports fish and game resource in the recreational interests of anglers and hunters, and, in particular*
 - (e) *in relation to planning,—*
 - (i) *to represent the interests and aspirations of anglers and hunters in the statutory planning process;*

6. The organisations advocacy work doesn't just focus on Resource Management work. In recent years there has been other reform such as Wildlife Act, Conservation Law, Biosecurity Act. In the regions comments on Fast Track applications has also been undertaken.
7. A draft Resource Management Policy went to NZC previously in 2024 which was developed in association with the cross organisational RMA team. Some of the specific projects has now changed with the repeal of the Natural Built Environments Act and the proposals for reform with the coalition government. However, policy on funding of legislative cases and processes is still required.
8. It is timely to finalise development of a Resource Management Policy to enable clarity around the process for funding applications, funding consideration and prioritisation, and the conditions of funding such as development of case theory and regulation reports back to the New Zealand Fish & Game Council. It is also recommended that a communications and advocacy strategy be developed for cases that could be subject to political and public commentary.

9. The proposed Resource Management Policy has been developed in consultation with the Regional Resource Management Team. This policy is provided in appendix 1. The key elements of the strategy include:
- a) Development of a funding decision scoring system;
 - b) Requirements to submit applications on the prescribed form;
 - c) Case theory and case plan to be provided to NZC for review and approval with the application.
 - d) The NZC CEO may direct that a Communications and engagement plan be developed and approved either before the NZC considers the application, or where material risks arise due the implementation of the case;
 - e) The Council that applied for funds will report back to NZC at least twice annually on implementation of the case theory and any changes to the case that is predicted to arise through for example presentation of evidence, expert conferencing, mediation, or decisions.
 - f) The Council that applied for funds will also report at least twice annually on milestones and expenditure against budget.
 - g) At the end of the process, key learnings from the case will be presented to NZC and the RM team along with the decision and other key documents.
 - h) Unused funds must be returned to the advocacy fund

Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga - Considerations for decision-making

Financial Implications

10. Budgets are already provided for this work and RMA fund application has been secured for the National Direction and RMA Phase 3 work.

Legislative Implications

11. We may need to write another version of this policy once we see the proposals in the Fish and Game Bill. This work could cover how the whole organisation prioritises their advocacy work and how we can develop consistent approaches to issues that arise in our advocacy work.

Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities

12. Nil

Policy Implications

13. Proposed policy to be consulted on by the regions.

Risks and Mitigations

14. Not having an up to date policy on how to spend the RMA fund.

Consultation

15. Consultation with regions and RMA team has occurred. Comments from Fish and Game regions are attached in appendix 2.

16. Fairly neutral feedback was received from Northland, Nelson Marlborough,

17. Support from CSI and Southland.

18. Objection to the policy was received from Otago and Ak / Waikato as they do not agree that NZC should be able to access the funds.

19. A number of regions thought that the RMA team should recommend decisions on fund applications.

Attachments:

Appendix 1 – Resource Management Policy

Appendix 2 – Comments from Fish and Game Regions.

POLICY: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & LEGISLATION

Section	Operational
Contact/Owner	NZC CEO
Last Review	New Policy
Next Review	April 2026
Approval	NZC
Effective Date	19 April 2026

1. PURPOSE

The Resource Management Policy is intended to provide policy on prioritising spending of the New Zealand Fish & Game Councils Resource Management Fund, along with the conditions associated with the provision of funds to support National and Regional Resource Management cases, and cases taken in relation to legislation relevant to hunts and anglers such as the Firearms Act, Wild Life Act, Conservation Act, and National Parks Act.

2. PART 1 – PRIORITY FOR SPENDING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FUND MONEY

Scope: The RMA fund could now be called “Resource Management Strategy Fund” to better reflect the range of cases that have been funded from it including Wildlife Act and Conservation Law Reform work. This fund can continue to fund regional policy and consents as well as significant changes to the legislation that we work under, where we need to obtain funding for external experts to assist with this work.

3. OVERALL GOALS

The allocation of funds to the advocacy fund will be set by the New Zealand Fish & Game Council as part of its annual budget process and following consultation with the Regional Fish & Game Councils. Any council can apply for funding, with funding awarded on the merits of the case and alignment with the priorities set out below:

3.1 Advocate for Fish and Game values – restoring degraded ecosystems and retaining those in good health where required to:

3.1.1 Recognise and protect the rights of hunters and anglers;

VALUES

TRUST

We are trusted as consistent and capable providers

INCLUSION

We recognise and respect diverse perspectives and cultural interests

CONNECTION

We are deeply connected with anglers, hunters, regulators and the public

SERVICE

We are enthusiastic, professional, kind and accountable

- 3.1.2 Recognise and protect salmonid fisheries;
- 3.1.3 Recognise and protect angling values
- 3.1.4 Recognise and protect game bird populations;
- 3.1.5 Recognise and protect recreational and/ or amenity values; and
- 3.1.6 Recognise and protect access for recreational users.
- 3.2 Develop productive relationships with iwi, which give effect to the Councils' legal responsibility to The Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- 3.3 Retain the Councils' functions, purpose, and independence, with improvements where possible, during reviews to the Wildlife and Conservation Acts.
- 3.4 Advocate for the protection and restoration of trout and salmon habitat as a part of healthy ecosystems;
- 3.5 Develop tools to address detrimental population impacts due to species interaction and advocate to embed those tools in legislation and policy.
- 3.6 Work towards updating Sports Fish and Game Management Plans across the country, and embedding the values identified in Sportsfish and Gamebird Management Plans in regional policy, this includes angling and hunting values and access.
- 3.7 Work towards including accurate mapping of Fish and Game values to communicate where the species we manage live, and for hunting and angling values.
- 3.8 Contribute to the restoration of the Councils' social and legislative licence through our work.
- 3.9 Collaboratively develop joint positions on key issues and shared advocacy resources between the Councils.
- 3.10 Build local and national relationships with key stakeholders with influence on legislative and policy processes.
- 3.11 Promote Regional Councils and Territorial Authorities to resource Long Term Plans sufficiently to implement meaningful State of the Environment monitoring, policy and enforcement.

Councils should aim to engage with decision makers early, participating where possible in legislation or plan writing and making fulsome submissions. After entering the legal system, cases that represent high value through precedent setting potential or the protection of important sports fish and game resources should be prioritised where limited funds are available (such as in 2025).

The following table provides a scoring matrix for proposed new cases. Cases which represent National Significance will be prioritised, if required over those with regional significance only.

	Precedent setting potential	Value of sports fish and game resources impacted	Likelihood of success	Potential strength of evidence to support the case	Political risk, risk to organisational Brand (low risk =4; high risk =1).	Total score for proposed new case
Locally important	3	2	1, 2, 3, or 4	1, 2, 3, or 4	1, 2, 3, or 4	
Regionally significant 1 region	6	4	1, 2, 3, or 4	1, 2, 3, or 4	1, 2, 3, or 4	
Regionally significant 2 or more regions	9	6	1, 2, 3, or 4	1, 2, 3, or 4	1, 2, 3, or 4	
Nationally significant	12	8	1, 2, 3, or 4	1, 2, 3, or 4	1, 2, 3, or 4	

4. FUNDING PROCESS

- 4.1 To apply for advocacy funds, the region must provide the application case on the prescribed form to be decided at the next available NZC meeting. If a decision is needed urgently, a workshop can be held and a decision recommended, to be confirmed at the next NZC meeting.
- 4.2 Case theory and case plan along with communications and engagement plan will be provided to NZC for review and approval with the application.
- 4.3 The Council that applied for funds will report back to NZC at least twice annually on implementation of the case theory and any changes to the case that is predicted to arise through for example presentation of evidence, expert conferencing, mediation, or decisions. The Council that applied for funds will also report at least two annually on milestones and expenditure against budget.
- 4.4 At the end of the process, key learnings from the case will be presented to NZC and the RM team along with the decision and other key documents.
- 4.5 Unused funds must be returned to the advocacy fund.

5 Review

This strategy should be reviewed every second year to ensure it is kept up to date. This should be undertaken with input from Fish & Games Resource Management Team

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT CONTROL

Prepared by: Helen Brosnan – Senior Policy Advisor NZC
Owned by: NZC
Authorised by Council
Date Issued (for Consultation): 28 February 2025
Next Review:

Resource Management & Legislation Policy

Northland - Neutral

– responded with no specific feedback

Nelson Marlborough - neutral

NM Council has no comment or suggestions on this draft policy, noting however the legal fund is essentially now being reframed to cover costs of NZC functions through now being used to fund input to national legislation, rather than the legal fund just covering resource management cases as it has done in the past. This may be appropriate given current proposed government changes to the Wildlife and Conservation Act functions along with future RMA changes, however the current quantum of funding – 100k top-up proposed for the next financial year, means very little

regional RMA case work will actually be able to be funded.

CSI – Support but thinks the RMA team should administer the funds

General Support

CSIFGC broadly supports the Resource Management and Legislation Policy, as a positive step toward strengthening the Fish and Game network's capacity to respond to environmental challenges and legislative changes that impact freshwater ecosystems and game bird habitats.

Empowering the Resource Management Team through Autonomy

We strongly support the autonomy of the Resource Management (RM) team in administering the fund. Operating under the strategic guidance of the Senior Policy Adviser and in consultation with the relevant regional CEO and the NZC CEO, the RM team must be empowered to act independently.

This model builds on the existing virtual team framework, reinforcing both national and

regional responsiveness. CSIFGC support is contingent on the RM team being granted the authority to initiate and cease funding as circumstances demand. Without this delegated authority, the RM team cannot effectively target resources or respond to emerging challenges.

Crucially, CSIFGC cannot support any arrangement where the RM team is subject to the

authority of NZFGC. True empowerment of the RM team depends on their ability to act with discretion and authority—anything less would undermine the effectiveness of the initiative.

OTAGO – objection to NZC being able to access funds for national advocacy

The Otago Fish & Game Council discussed this paper at its May 20th meeting. Following our review,

we raise the following key concerns and recommendations:

Purpose and Scope of the Legal Fund

The original purpose of the regional legal pool fund was to support RMA-related case costs at the regional level. This was a targeted and practical use of funds to assist councils engaged in statutory processes under the Resource Management Act.

The proposed renaming and reframing of the fund indicates a shift in focus toward national-level advocacy. While national advocacy is important, it should be supported through other New Zealand Council (NZC) budget lines specifically allocated for national work. Redirecting this fund from its original intent risks undermining the ability of regional councils to respond to regional statutory challenges a core function under the Act.

2. Policy vs Strategy Confusion

There is a fundamental lack of clarity around whether the proposed changes constitute a policy or a funding strategy. In practice, this operates as a funding strategy - that is, a framework for prioritising limited resources at the national level.

The proposed prioritisation matrix is helpful in theory, but its effectiveness is constrained by the ad hoc manner in which applications are received. Typically, applications are submitted one at a time throughout the year, and if funding is available, they are granted without being assessed against other potential initiatives. Rarely are multiple projects available simultaneously for comparative analysis. This undermines the utility of the prioritisation matrix as a decision-making tool.

3. Funding Process and Decision-Making

The process by which applications are evaluated and recommendations made to NZC lacks transparency and structure. Notably:

- It is unclear who is responsible for assessing application
- NZC appears to be making decisions without detailed analytical input.
- The organisation already has an RMA group with relevant expertise, yet their involvement seems limited or absent.

We recommend that the process be amended to include a formal assessment stage carried out by qualified staff or external contractors. This would ensure that all applications are subject to a consistent, robust evaluation before being considered by NZC.

Recommendation

Otago Fish & Game Council recommends that NZC:

- Retain the original intent of the legal fund as a tool for regional statutory support.
- Fund national advocacy through other designated NZC budget lines.
- Clarify whether this is a policy or funding strategy and reflect that in naming and documentation.
- Introduce a structured application and assessment process, including the use of the RMA group or other expert support.

We welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively toward a funding framework that is fair, transparent, and aligned with statutory obligations and regional needs.

Southland - Support with suggestions

The Southland Council supports the intent to clarify legal funding priorities, but recommend significant revisions to:

- Restore clarity around the fund's purpose and scope.
- Formalise a structured and comparative assessment process.
- Ensure involvement of technical expertise before NZC decision-making.

Auckland Waikato – Oppose fund should be for regional RMA support only, develop a funding evaluation process with RMA planners.

Resource Management & Legislation Policy

The Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Council views that the proposed policy provides a significant shift away from the original intent of the fund. The fund was established to support regional RMA cases, and it appears that it may now be used to provide funding for national advocacy initiatives.

Council noted that the policy often self identifies as a 'strategy' and the terms are used interchangeably. Council agrees that renaming the document a funding strategy is more appropriate.

It was agreed that having some basis for evaluating RMA funding applications is helpful, however the proposal lacks clarity of intent and implementation. The issue around evaluating the merits of RMA cases has been discussed previously. It was suggested at the time, that a group of senior RMA practitioners from the regions and external planning/legal experts could

be used to provide feedback on fund applications. The current document stays silent on the decision-making process and who would be involved, but presumably it would be NZC. The matrix might be a useful starting point, but many of the categories are subjective and therefore a consensus decision making approach using several experts would be much more appropriate.

Decision: Council does not support the proposed policy and suggests the following amendments

Recommendations: For the Auckland/Waikato Council to support the policy the following amendments need to be made.

- Rewrite the document to clearly stipulate that funding is for regional RMA support.
- Classify the document as a funding strategy rather than national policy.
- In further consultations with expert RMA practitioners within the regions, develop a funding evaluation process.

Taranaki - Oppose, suggests different scope

Councillors considered the draft policy and provides the feedback on - or seeks clarification on - the following:

- The scoring matrix table that established priorities could be a precise tool for an imprecise process – how the scores are established and how would they be used in practice– e.g. if an advocacy action had little or no chance of succeeding then why would you considered proceeding with it? If an arbitrary number is reached that is very close to another potential case, then how precise is using the matrix as a drafting tool?

What approach would be made if there were multiple regional planning processes being

run concurrently and how this would be dealt with if a case was not proceeded to the Environment Court (the opportunity cost of not following through on an issue) – i.e. what

is the alternative approach?.

How we will deal with Environment Court cases collectively – for regions that do not

have dedicated RM staff or would there be a collective project management team once

it (or if it) reaches Environment Court level or higher.

There was the potential situation in December 2024 that all 16 Regional Council/Unitary

Authorities would be notifying plan changes to be in-line with NPS FM 2020. This did not

eventuate but is still a possibility in 2026/2027 when these regional plan changes are expected en masse.

It was recognised that cases that normally do not present themselves in an orderly manner for Fish and Game to advocate – and it is exceptionally difficult to predict the progress of a Regional Council's process. How would Fish and Game involvement be

affected if an equally worthy advocacy action is required within 2-3 months of engaging

the first Court action?

If a Court Action is undertaken – there is often a commitment to be involved in higher

Court action – usually to defend a decision (if favourable).

It is recognised that small (licence holder base) Fish and Game Councils will be unlikely to access what was the regional Legal Fund. Will Taranaki Fish and Game Council be resigned to providing a low-level advocacy submission at Regional Hearings level with no prospect taking any issue to a higher court.

Wellington - Oppose, revise scope

Councillors considered the draft policy and provide the following feedback:

- 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 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. Is NZ Council

prepared to allow accumulation of funds in the RM budget 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 from regional reserves

□ Wellington Council consider the draft policy as presented needed to be modified and clarified before fully supporting using this approach.

Eastern - support

14. DRAFT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & LEGISLATION POLICY

14.2 Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that Council supports staff recommendation to create a framework and scoring matrix process, to help to keep the allocation of funds transparent and fair. [25/05/14.2]

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13 February 2026

NZ Fish and Game Council

Feedback on Consultation on Draft Policy: Resource Management and Legislation

Wellington Fish and Game Council considered the draft *Policy: Resource Management and Legislation* (dated April 2025) at its meeting on 10 February 2026. The Council noted it had previously responded to an earlier consultation round on this matter in June 2025 (feedback dated 4 June 2025 attached).

This round of additional consultation provided an opportunity for Wellington Council to consider the draft policy given the changes in the environmental advocacy landscape.

Wellington Council recognises the rapidly evolving environmental advocacy landscape, driven by:

- An extensive Central Government legislative programme reforming the resource management system and local government functions including significant structural reform with the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill. The latter could remove the leverage previously included in RMA s7(h) that will drastically alter Fish and Game's approach to advocacy.
- The pausing of regional plan reviews by regional councils.
- Potential changes to the hierarchy and strength of Central Government direction guiding regional plan development.
- National directives establishing standards for wastewater treatment plant discharges.

Changes to legislation and the implementation of a top-down, hierarchical planning approach by Central Government will require Fish and Game to adapt its advocacy to effectively represent the interests of hunters and anglers.

Clarify the Purpose of the RM Fund

The purpose of the Resource Management Fund requires clarification and formal confirmation across the organisation. Originally established as the Regional Legal Fund and administered by NZ Council, its intent was to provide regions with sufficient resources to participate effectively in planning processes beyond the hearing stage. While this approach was effective, it is no longer financially sustainable.

The Changing Focus of the Advocacy Function

Fish and Game simply won't be able to effectively advocate as it has in the past – given the limited resources and establishing case law to support the interpretation of the new legislation.

The focus has shifted from influencing regional planning processes run by regional councils to influencing Central Government direction, which will largely determine regional plan content. There remains a need at the regional level to audit how these plans are implemented (at consenting level), but the current priority should be on engaging and influencing at the legislation and national policy levels.

Promoting NZ Council to Develop an RM Advocacy Strategy

Wellington Council considers that NZ Council should link the legal funding and prioritisation to a Resource Management Advocacy Strategy that defines strategic direction that is proactive, and prioritises allocation of funding to align with the top-down hierarchical approach:

- **Legislative primacy:** Prioritise engagement that influences recognition of Fish and Game's core values as this provides the greatest leverage and long-term impact.
- **Policy integration:** Focus on national policy statements and directives that convert legislative intent into enforceable priorities.
- **Regional implementation efficiency:** Target regional planning and consenting processes where national direction is implemented and legal intervention can influence outcomes.

The review of priorities should take into account urgency of advocacy action, including supporting longer term outcomes such as actions to support Water Conservation Orders (e.g. reviewing implementation of existing or establishing new WCOs).

Governance and Review

Council considers that a regular review of priorities for funding is appropriate in this dynamic operating environment:

- Establish a National Resource Management Working Group to oversee alignment and approve high-priority allocations.
- Review allocations annually based on outcomes, litigation trends, and policy shifts.
- Maintain transparent reporting to ensure accountability.

Wellington Council considers that NZ Council should proactively develop a Resource Management Advocacy Strategy in advance of any legislative requirement. This would enable funding to be allocated strategically and targeted to the most appropriate level of engagement, and would inform and refine the draft funding allocation policy currently under consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft policy.

Yours sincerely



Paul Dewar

Chairman

Health & Safety

New Zealand Fish and Game Council Meeting 180: 27th Feb – 1st March 2026

Prepared by: Adrienne Murray, HR & H&S Advisor, NZ Fish and Game Council

Kōrero taunaki - Summary of considerations

Purpose

This report to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council seeks approval for consultation on, and subsequent approval to implement:

- The Health & Safety (H&S) framework across NZ Fish & Game
- Health & Safety Committee (employee engagement)

Once approved by NZC, this policy is binding on all elected Councillors, staff and contractors across NZ F&G, including Regional Councillors, regional staff, regional volunteers and contractors working in regional offices

Financial considerations

Nil Budgetary provision / Unbudgeted

Risk

Low XMedium High Extreme

Ngā taunaki – CEO Recommends

NZC Staff recommend the following motion:

That the New Zealand Fish and Game Council:

1. Receive the information.
2. Agree the requirement for a NZ Fish & Game H&S Framework and the H&S Committee
3. Delegate to the Chief Operating Officer the authority to consult with regions on the framework and the H&S Committee

Executive Summary - Whakarāpopoto

- 1 NZ Fish & Game are required to meet HSWA which means acknowledging that WorkSafe through this legislation identifies NZ F&G as one entity or PCBU.

- 2 The H&S framework policy acknowledges our obligations under this legislation.
The NZ Council and the twelve F&G Regional Councils are one PCBU and Officers of the PCBU (those who are personally responsible for meeting the obligations under the Act) include all NZC Councillors, the NZC Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer, all Regional Councillors, and all Regional Council Chief Executives
The commitment to providing a safe environment for all is explicit as is the obligations and roles of all who are engaged with NZ F&G.
- 3 The HSWA is very specific regarding employee engagement Section 26 – Employee Engagement, in particular the role that staff play in identifying risks and hazards, contributing to improvements in overall H&S within their region and to F&G overall. We do not meet this legislated requirement.
- 4 These two policy documents set out the overarching approach for Fish & Game Health & Safety, to meet legislative regulations and supporting Codes of Practice requirements.
- 5 The current H&S environment for Fish & Game does not meet legislative requirements, many people are not aware of their obligations and accountabilities, our current documentation does not meet requirements and therefore this is a significant risk to NZ F&G and all regions.

Background - Takenga mai

- 6 Four regions were audited against the ISO standard for H&S in the last quarter of 2025 (Northland, Eastern, North Canterbury and West Coast). These regions openly shared all the requirements for the audits. It was made clear that the audits were not to judge but rather to identify issues that put F&G at significant risk.
- 7 The results of these audits made it clear that NZ F&G does not meet the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA), and within that act, we do not meet the requirements of Section 26 – Employee Engagement.
- 8 Ms Wright found a willingness amongst staff to comply with the legislation and H&S processes but a significant lack of knowledge of the legislation, the obligations and accountabilities of F&G Councillors, Managers and in many cases their own accountabilities.
- 9 This paper and the attached policies set out to enable NZ F&G to meet its legislative obligations, to enable a safe environment for staff, volunteers, contractors and other people at work and to manage the current significant business risk.

Discussion - Kōrerorero

- 10 The two attached policies, pave the way for a Health & Safety framework that enables F&G to reduce risk to all Councils, staff, volunteers and others that may work with us.
- 11 The Health & Safety Framework policy provides commitment to H&S across all of the organisation and clearly defines roles and responsibilities. This information is provided from
 - 11.1 The Health and Safety in the Workplace Legislation 2015 and proceeding updates
 - 11.2 Worksafe <https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/getting-started/introduction-hswa-special-guide/>
 - 11.3 Professional advice from Ms Wright following the audits of the four regions.
- 12 The second policy “Health & Safety Committee” sets out the legislated requirements for employee engagement within an organisation
 - 12.1 Legislation is clear about Health and Safety Reps (HSR) within employee groups, which we have defined as within each region and the NZC office.
 - 12.2 Staff elect their own representative and are not appointed by the Manager.
 - 12.3 HSR’s are mandated in legislation to have up to 2 days per year in training and that the first training provides an NZQA level 3 qualification..
 - 12.4 NZC has budgeted for the 12 reps, once elected, to meet in Wellington for the first two days of training. The budget for this is \$19k including travel and accommodation.
 - 12.5 HSR’s will provide support to staff and to Regional Managers through communication, recommendations to any improvements to processes (ie tail gates) and sharing information between regions and NZC.
 - 12.6 HSR’s will meet quarterly (or sooner if required) with the HR & HS Advisor and COO, usually by teams to provide recommendations for changes to policy and processes, discuss concerns and raise any issues directly connected to Health & Safety.
- 13 It should be noted that the current Health & Safety Committee does not meet legislated requirements.
- 14 All H&S policies will sit under the H&S Framework policy and will be reviewed to ensure they meet the requirements of the Framework Policy
- 15 Some HR policies and job descriptions will need to be updated to include H&S obligations. This requirement is across all staff (including Managers) and will also include an update in Councillor policies and descriptors across all Regions.
- 16 Appendix 2 lists the F&G Policies and Procedures that Support H&S

Options- Ngā kōwhiringa

- 17 The Council may
 - a. Agree to consultation on the two policies
 - b. Agree to amend the policies prior to consultation
 - c. The Council will have a further opportunity to consider the policies following consultation

Considerations for decision-making - Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga

Financial Implications

- 18 The current H&S budget in NZC is \$15,000

Legislative Implications

- 19 These new policies ensure that F&G will meet legislated obligations

Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities

- 20 There are no treaty obligations.

Policy Implications

- 21 This is new policy that fits with the F&G Organisational Policy and our obligations and accountabilities to enable healthy and safe work environments for everyone engaged in F&G work environments

Risks and mitigations

- 22 Health & Safety is a significant risk for all work environments.
- 23 We are required to meet the legislation, regulations and Approved Codes of Practice
- 24 Without the implementation of policy such as this we do not meet legislative requirements and put the organisation, and officers (Councillors, CEO, COO, Regional Managers) at potential personal risk should there be a significant or notifiable incident anywhere across F&G

Consultation

- 25 Regions will be consulted on these two policies and elections for HSR's will commence when consultation commences.

Next actions - Ngā mahinga e whai ake nei

- 26 If agreed:
 - 26.1 Consultation will commence with all regions
 - 26.2 Elections for HSR's will be undertaken in March. Once completed training for all HSR's, the HR & HS Advisor and the COO will take place.
 - 26.3 H&S policies and procedures that will be binding on all regions and NZC, and associated HR policies will be reviewed and consulted on as needed

POLICY: HEALTH & SAFETY FRAMEWORK

Section	Operational
Contact/Owner	NZC HR
Last Review	New Policy
Next Review	February 2028
Approval	NZC
Effective Date	Once approved

1. PURPOSE

F&G is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace for all workers and other persons who may be affected by our work.

The overall aim of this policy is to promote a positive Health & Safety culture and to encourage high quality Health & Safety systems and practices. It will also support compliance with the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015; regulations made under the Act, and the supporting Approved Codes of Practice (Appendix 1)

This policy sets out our overarching approach to Health & Safety and provides the framework for all supporting Health & Safety procedures and systems.

2. Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

The guiding principle of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA or *the Act*) is that workers and other persons should be given the highest level of protection against harm to their health, safety, and welfare from work risks as is reasonably practicable.

HSWA is the key work health and safety law. It sets out the health and safety duties that must be complied with.

VALUES

TRUST

We are trusted as consistent and capable providers

INCLUSION

We recognise and respect, diverse perspectives and cultural interests

CONNECTION

We are deeply connected with anglers, hunters, regulators and the public

SERVICE

We are enthusiastic, professional, kind and accountable

Purpose of the HSWA

To provide for a balanced framework to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces by:

- protecting workers and other persons against harm to their health and, safety and welfare by eliminating or minimising risks arising from work.
- providing for fair and effective workplace representation, consultation, co-operation, and resolution of issues
- encouraging unions and employer organisations to take a constructive role in promoting improvements in work health and safety practices and assisting PCBUs and workers to achieve a healthier and safer working environment
- promoting the provision of advice, information, education and training in relation to work health and safety
- securing compliance with the Act through effective and appropriate compliance and enforcement measures
- ensuring appropriate scrutiny and review of action taken by persons performing functions or exercising powers under the Act
- providing a framework for continuous improvement and progressively higher standards of health and safety.

3. SCOPE

According to the Act, a PCBU is a 'person conducting a business or undertaking'. The New Zealand Council and the twelve F&G Regional Councils are one PCBU under this policy.

Officers of the PCBU (those who are personally responsible for meeting the obligations under the Act) include all NZC Councillors, the NZC Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer, all Regional Councillors, and all Regional Council Chief Executives.

Once approved by NZC, this policy is binding on all elected Councillors, staff and contractors and Regional Councillors, regional staff, regional volunteers and contractors working in regional offices.

4. POLICY:

F&G through the NZ Council (NZC) is committed to ensuring a safe environment for its workers, volunteers, contractors and other people at work.

NZC recognises that it has a critical role to play in the implementation of Health & Safety and the Health & Safety culture of the organisation.

NZC will fulfil its role by ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures are adopted and implemented and by reviewing and monitoring the identification, reporting, culture and management of Health & Safety hazards and risks

All workers volunteers, contractors and other people at work will understand and abide by the Health & Safety policies and processes promulgated by either NZC (and were consulted with regions) and by region councils for Health & Safety policies and processes within their own regions.

All regional Health & Safety policies and processes must either meet or exceed standards set by NZC.

NZC will ensure that all Health & Safety policies and processes meet or exceed standards set by the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015; regulations made under the Act, and the supporting Approved Codes of Practice

5. **OUR GOAL**

Seamless integration of health and safety risk management into all F&G activities to ensure the best possible safety outcomes for our people

6. **OTHER POLICIES SUPPORT THIS FRAMEWORK**

F&G strategic, governance, management, Human Resources and specific health & safety policies support this framework (Appendix 2)

7. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Appendix 3 describes the duty of care for all Councilors, Managers and staff within F&G

8. **REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or sooner if there are significant organisational changes, legislative changes or a serious incident

9. **OUR EXPECTATIONS OF YOU**

Breaches

These policies reflect “the way we do things around here.”

Depending on the seriousness of the breach, if you are found to have breached these policies we will:

- talk with you to make sure you know the terms of the policy you have breached, including what appropriate support we can offer.
- make sure you know the required behaviour expected from now on; and/or,
- take disciplinary action if necessary.

See our **code of conduct** and the ‘Serious misconduct’ clause of your employment agreement for more information about what behaviour is expected and what action may be taken for breaches.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT CONTROL

Prepared by:
Owned by
Authorised by Council
Date Issued (for Consultation
Next Review:

**SAFETY FIRST.
SAFETY FOR YOURSELF, YOUR CO-WORKER AND THE PUBLIC MUST NEVER BE COMPROMISED.
EVERYONE ON THE WORKSITE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING SURE THAT SAFETY IS
MAINTAINED.**

Appendix 1 Regulations and Supporting Approved Codes of Practice

1. Health and Safety at Work (Worker Engagement, Participation and Representation) Regulations 2016. [Worker Engagement, Participation and Representation Regulations 2016](#);
2. Health and Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations 2016. [General Risk and Workplace Management Regulations 2016](#);
3. Employment Relations Act 2000
4. Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Compensation Act 2001
5. Land Transport NZ
6. Electricity Act 1992
7. Transport Accident Investigation Commission Act 1990
8. Smoke-free Environments Act 1990
9. Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO)
10. Environmental Risk Management Authority www.ermanz.govt.nz
11. Factory and Commercial Premises (First Aid) Regulations 1985
12. Arms Act 1983
13. Maritime Transport Act 1994
14. And all common NZ law.

Approved Codes of Practice

The list below outlines Approved Codes of Practice that are applicable for Fish and Game. They can be downloaded from: <http://www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/information-guidance/approved-codes-of-practice-acops>

Hazardous Substances: Management of in the workplace.

Noise: in the workplace

General Safety Guidelines

The following guidelines can be downloaded from:

<http://www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/information-guidance/all-guidance-alphabetical-listing>

Robbery: Guidelines for the Safety of Staff from the Threat of Armed Robbery or Violent Offenders

Computers: Guidelines for Using Computers

Chainsaws: A Guide to Safety with chainsaws

Machinery: Guidelines for the Provision of Facilities and General Safety in Machinery Vehicle or Vessel Operation

Shift-work: Advice for Employers and Employees

Stress: and Fatigue

Legal Documentation required under the Act

Under HSWA there are only two documents that you are legally required to have

- an accident register and
- a list of all of the hazardous substances kept on your business premises.

You are required to have a system which identifies and manages the risks created by the work you do. The system does not need to be complex but must clearly identify the risks and

record the steps you have put in place to manage and communicate the risks.
Best practice is to maintain all risk registers, document Health and Safety process's associated with field work (via field safety plans) and all worker engagement meetings.

Further Information on the HSWA

For further information see -

<https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/getting-started/introduction-hswa-special-guide/>

Appendix 2

Fish & Game Policies and Procedures that Support Health & Safety

- Fish & Game Organisational Strategy
- Operational Plans
- Hazard/ Risk Management
- Incident, injury, illness and near-miss reporting policy
- Worker Engagement, Participation & Representation Policy (Health and Safety Reps and the H&S committee)
- Emergency Management
- Emergency Evacuation Procedures
- Remote/ Lone Worker
- Communication
- Compliance Procedures
- Use of Vehicles
- Managing Fatigue
- Bullying, Harassment & Psychosocial Risk
- Personal Protection Equipment
- Maritime
- First Aid
- Drug & Alcohol
- Fieldwork
- Hazardous substances
- Maintenance of Equipment
- Hatchery Operations
- Office Security

- Job descriptions
- Key Accountabilities
- Induction, Training and Competency
- Disciplinary

Note: This list is **not exhaustive and may be added to**

Appendix 3

Roles and Accountabilities

<p>PCBU: F&G is the PCBU</p>	<p>Primary Duty of Care</p> <p>F&G has primary responsibility for the Health & Safety of workers and others influenced by its work – this is known as the ‘primary duty of care’.</p> <p>We must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the Health & Safety of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. our workers (defined as staff, volunteers and contractors) 2. any other workers who are influenced or directed by the business. 3. We must also look after other people who could be at risk by the work of the organisation, for example customers, visitors, children and young people, or the general public. <p>The primary duty of care is a broad overarching duty which includes, but is not limited to, an organisation having, as far as reasonably practicable, effective practices in place to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Provide and maintain a work environment that is without Health & Safety risks. Note that WorkSafe defines health risks to include those that may create mental harm. <i>WorkSafe defines mental harm as significant cognitive, emotional, or behavioural impact arising from one or more work-related risk factors. Mental harm of this kind may be either acute or chronic and may result from single or repeated exposure to risk factor(s). This is where a risk factor(s) has affected wellbeing, potentially to the point of causing mental ill-health or illness.)</i> 5. Provide and maintain safe systems of work (eg work processes) 6. Provide and maintain safe plant and structures and maintain them in good condition <i>Plant and structures are defined as buildings, and all equipment used by any workers</i> 7. Ensure that plant, structures and substances are safely used, handled and stored 8. Provide adequate facilities (that are clean, safe, accessible, in good working order and maintained to stay that way) for the welfare of workers when doing work for our organisation 9. Provide any information, training, instruction, or supervision that is necessary to protect all persons from risks to their Health & Safety arising from the work of our organisation 10. Monitor the health of workers and the conditions at the workplace for the purpose of preventing injury or illness of workers when doing work for your organisation 11. Enable employee led engagement on Health & Safety policies, systems, processes and changes that provide for continued improvements of health & safety in the workplace
<p>Officers Officers are those responsible for ensuring the implementation of policy in their areas of work (eg: Regional</p>	<p>All officers have a proactive duty of due diligence to ensure that the F&G region and/or the NZC Office understands and manages its key Health & Safety risks.</p> <p>There are six obligations under the Act that Officers are personally responsible for.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acquire and update their knowledge of Health & Safety matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintain a working knowledge of HSWA and relevant regulations

<p>Managers and NZC Chief Operating Officer)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stay informed about sector-specific Health & Safety risks ○ Participate in Health & Safety training as required ○ Understand the nature of the organisations' operations and its risk profile <p>2. Understand the organisation's key operational risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be informed of critical risks and controls ○ Ensure emerging risks (including psychosocial risks) are considered ○ Be committed to effective worker engagement and participation including electing Health & Safety representatives and establishing a Health & Safety committee ○ Ensure access to resources and systems to eliminate or minimise risk <p>3. Ensure adequate resourcing for Health & Safety (people, time, budget)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create and approve clear Health & Safety policies, procedures and systems ○ Ensure competent personnel are responsible for Health & Safety management ○ Ensure that workers and volunteers will receive a Health & Safety induction when they start, and role-specific training and refresher training as required. <p>4. Ensure information about hazards, risks & incidents gets to Councillors and is actioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure Notifiable events are reported to WorkSafe New Zealand as required (see appendix 1) ○ Ensure all Regional Councils provide NZC with timely and robust Health & Safety information, in the format requested ○ Receive and consider regular Health & Safety reports ○ Ensure reporting includes leading and lagging indicators ○ Require timely notification of serious incidents and notifiable events and seek assurance if information is incomplete or concerning <p>5. Ensure the PCBU complies with its obligations under the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015 and the regulations and that systems are in place to comply with HSWA and regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor incident investigations and corrective actions ○ Support audits, reviews and independent assurance where appropriate, <p>6. Verify that resources and systems are in place and effective .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participate in site visits and safety conversations ○ Review audit outcomes and improvement plans <p>All Managers will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement this and other supporting policies ● Identify and manage risks in their areas of responsibility ● Consult with workers on Health & Safety matters ● Ensure incidents are reported, investigated and addressed ● Support training and ongoing learning
<p>Officers who are volunteers (NZC Councillors and Regional Councillors)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have a due diligence duty to ensure the PCBU complies with its duties and obligations. They do not commit an offence if they fail to meet it. However, volunteer officers may be prosecuted as 'other persons' at the workplace if they fail to take reasonable care of their own, or another person's Health & Safety while at the workplace, or they fail to comply with reasonable instructions about Health & Safety given by the PCBU.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These obligations are required in law and apply with or without the adoption of this policy. • Compliance with the full suite of F&G Health & Safety policies will ensure that these obligations are met and risk of prosecution under Health & Safety Law is reduced.
Workers (our Staff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take reasonable care for their own Health & Safety • Take reasonable care not to hurt or adversely affect others • Follow Health & Safety instructions and policies • Use equipment and PPE when required and as instructed • Report hazards, incidents, injuries and near-misses promptly
Health & Safety Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a contact point for staff Health & Safety feedback or issues • Proactively report any hazards they are aware of • Undertake training to perform the role • Work with managers to upskill staff in Health & Safety aspects and requirements • Participate in Health & Safety team meetings
Contractors/ Visitors and Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with Fish & Games Health & Safety requirements (including following site rules) • Not create a Health & Safety risk for others

Appendix 4

TERMS USED IN THE HEALTH & SAFETY AT WOK ACT

Duty Holders

There are four types of duty holders that have work health and safety duties:

- Persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU)
- Officers
- Workers
- Other persons at the workplace (e.g. visitors)

PCBU

The PCBU is a 'person conducting a business or undertaking'. Fish & Game as an Entity is a PCBU.

Primary Duty of Care

- The PCBU (Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking) must ensure, so far as reasonably practical, the health and safety of workers, and that other people are not put at risk by its work. This is called the "Primary Duty of Care".

The Primary duty of care is a broad and overarching duty. It includes, but is not limited to, so far as reasonably practicable:

- providing and maintaining a work environment that is without risks to health and safety;
- providing and maintaining safe plant and structures;
- providing and maintaining safe systems of work;
- ensuring the safe use, handling and storage of plant, structures and substances;
- providing adequate facilities for the welfare at work for workers;
- providing any information, training, instruction, or supervision that is necessary to protect all persons from risks to their health and safety arising from work carried out as part of the conduct for the business or undertaking;
- monitoring the health of workers and the conditions at the workplace for the purposes of preventing injury or illness of workers arising from the conduct of the business or undertaking;
- provide healthy and safe worker accommodation.

PCBU has two duties:

- to engage with workers who carry out work for them on health and safety matters that may directly affect them;
- to have practices that give workers reasonable opportunities to participate effectively in improving health and safety in the business or undertaking on an ongoing basis. (worker participation **practices**)

Officer

An officer includes

- NZC individual Councillors,
- CEO,
- COO, Regional Councillors,
- Regional Manager for each Fish & Game entity.

Officers need to exercise due diligence to ensure the PCBU complies with its health and safety duties.

Persons that have 'Officer' in their job title such as Fish and Game Officer, are NOT deemed an Officer within the definition of the HSWA Act 2015.

Workers

A Worker is an individual who carries out work in any capacity for Fish & Game.

A Worker includes staff, a contractor or subcontractor, an employee of a contractor or subcontractor, an employee of a labour hire company who is working for Fish & Game, an apprentice or trainee, an outworker, a person on work experience or work trial, a volunteer worker, other persons per section 19 of the HSWA.

An Honorary Ranger is considered a Worker within the HSWA.

Workers have their own health and safety duties.

Workers must "so far as reasonably practical":

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety;
- take reasonable care that what they do, or do not do, does not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons;
- co-operate with any reasonable workplace health and safety policy or procedure that has been notified to workers;
- comply, so far as reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU, so the PCBU can comply with HSWA and regulations.

Other Persons at Workplaces

Other persons at workplaces include workplace visitors, public, school groups. Other persons need to:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- take reasonable care that others are not harmed by something they do, or do not do
- comply, as far as they are reasonably able, with the PCBU's reasonable health and safety instructions that are given so that the PCBU can comply with HSWA or regulations

So far as is Reasonably Practicable

The primary duty of care requires the PCBU to ensure the health and safety 'so far as is reasonably practicable'. In this context, something is reasonably practicable if it is reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety, having weighed up and considered all the relevant matters, including:

- How likely are any risks to occur?
- How severe could the harm that might result from the risk be?
- What a person knows or ought to reasonably know about the risk and ways of eliminating or minimising it?
- What measures exist to eliminate or minimise the risk?
- How available and suitable is the control measure?

Definition of a Risk

HSWA clarifies that "risk" includes behaviour that has the potential to cause death, injury or illness (physical or mental).

Offences & Penalties

Prosecutions and penalties may be applied not only to a PCBU but also an Officer and an individual worker.

Notifiable injury or illness

If a notifiable event occurs, then you will be required to keep a record of the event for five years. Notifiable events are those workplace incidents that result in a death, serious injury or serious illness.

In the Act, unless the context otherwise requires, a **notifiable injury or illness**, in relation to a person, means—

- (a) any of the following injuries or illnesses that require the person to have immediate treatment (other than first aid):
 - the amputation of any part of his or her body

- a serious head injury
- a serious eye injury
- a serious burn
- the separation of his or her skin from an underlying tissue (such as degloving or scalping)
- a spinal injury
- the loss of a bodily function
- serious lacerations:
- (b) an injury or illness that requires, or would usually require, the person to be admitted to a hospital for immediate treatment:
- (c) an injury or illness that requires, or would usually require, the person to have medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance:
- (d) any serious infection (including occupational zoonoses) to which the carrying out of work is a significant contributing factor, including any infection that is attributable to carrying out work—
 - with micro-organisms; or
 - that involves providing treatment or care to a person; or
 - (iii)
 - that involves contact with human blood or bodily substances; or
 - (iv)
 - that involves handling or contact with animals, animal hides, animal skins, animal wool or hair, animal carcasses, or animal waste products; or
 - (v)
 - that involves handling or contact with fish or marine mammals:
- (e) any other injury or illness declared by regulations to be a notifiable injury or illness for the purposes of this section.

POLICY AND TERMS OF REFERENCE: NZ FISH & GAME HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Section	Operational
Contact/Owner	NZC HR
Last Review	New Policy
Next Review	February 2028
Approval	NZC
Effective Date	Once approved

1. PURPOSE

This policy establishes the framework for the creation, composition, and operation of the NZ Fish & Game Health and Safety Committee (HSC).

The HSC supports Fish & Game's commitment to providing a safe and healthy workplace and to meeting its obligations under the **Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA)** and associated regulations.

This policy sits under the NZ Fish & Game Health & Safety Framework.

The establishment and operation of HSC provides a formal mechanism for consultation, cooperation, and coordination between the NZC, the Regional Councils and staff on matters relating to health and safety. The Committee is an advisory body. It does not replace management responsibility for health and safety but supports decision-making through informed recommendations.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to everyone working for Fish & Game, across all Fish & Game Regions and the New Zealand Council

- Staff
- Contractors
- Volunteers

VALUES

TRUST

We are trusted as consistent and capable providers

INCLUSION

We recognise and respect, diverse perspectives and cultural interests

CONNECTION

We are deeply connected with anglers, hunters, regulators and the public

SERVICE

We are enthusiastic, professional, kind and accountable

The Health & Safety at Work Act (HSWA) sets out a formal process for the election of Health & Safety

Reps which requires that the HSR's in each region are elected by staff and that elected Councillors and Regional Managers who considered Officers of the PCBU cannot be members of the Fish & Game HSC.

The HR Manager, COO and CEO are ex-officio members of the Committee. A Chair for the committee is elected by the HSR's from regions and NZC office

3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This policy is informed by, and must be read consistently with:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA)
- And subsection: Health and Safety at Work (Worker Engagement, Participation, and Representation) Regulations 2016

4. POLICY

The organisation is committed to:

- Establishing and maintaining a Health and Safety Committee that reflects the diversity of the organisation's regions and work activities
- Engaging with staff in health and safety matters that affect them
- Supporting effective staff participation and representation
- Using the HSC as a key forum to identify risks, review incidents, and promote continuous improvement in health and safety performance

5. Composition of the Committee

The Health and Safety Committee will comprise:

- **One staff representative** from each region, elected by staff in accordance with the HSWA and relevant regulations
- The **HR &HS Advisor** (ex officio)
- The **Chief Operating Officer (COO)** (ex officio)

The Committee report to the CEO and will provide a paper to each NZC meeting.

The NZC meeting will always have Health & Safety on the agenda

Staff Representatives

- Staff representatives must be elected by the staff they represent, following a fair and transparent election process (i.e. in a region)
- The NZC HR &HS Advisor will call for nominations for staff representatives from each region. Five (5) days will be provided for staff to respond and if more than one nomination is received for a representative position, then the HR &HS Advisor will on behalf of the Regional Manager, conduct an election. The form of the election is at the discretion of the HR &HS Advisor, although a secret ballot will be conducted if requested.

- Where a region does not have a nomination for a representative, the HR &HS Advisor in consultation with the Regional Manager may nominate a representative. This person must then be endorsed by staff
- Each Regional Council will be represented to ensure local risks, issues, and perspectives are reflected

Chair

- The Committee will elect a Chair from among its members

Term of Membership

- Staff representatives will serve a term of **two years**, with eligibility for re-election
- Management members will serve while they hold their respective roles or until a replacement is nominated

6. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This policy and the Terms of Reference will be reviewed **every two years**, or earlier if:

- There are significant legislative changes
- Organisational structure or operations change
- The Committee recommends a review

Prepared by:
Owned by
Authorised by Council
Date Issued (for Consultation
Next Review:

Appendix 1 Roles and Responsibilities

1. Health and Safety Committee

The Committee is responsible for:

- Providing a forum for consultation on health and safety matters
- Assisting in the development, review, and monitoring of health and safety policies, procedures, and systems
- Reviewing health and safety performance, including incidents, near misses, hazards, and trends
- Making recommendations to NZC through the CEO on improvements to health and safety
- Supporting compliance with health and safety legislation
- Promoting a positive health and safety culture across all regions

2. Staff Representatives

Staff representatives are responsible for:

- Representing the health and safety interests and concerns of all staff in their region
- Consulting with staff prior to Committee meetings, where practicable
- Communicating Committee outcomes back to staff
- Participating constructively in Committee discussions and decision-making

3. Management Representatives

The HR &HS Advisor and COO are responsible for:

- Providing leadership and organisational support to the Committee
- Ensuring Committee recommendations are considered by NZC
- Facilitating access to relevant information, resources, and expertise
- Supporting implementation of the change management process and agreed actions

Appendix 2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Authority

The Health and Safety Committee is an advisory body. It does not replace management responsibility for health and safety. The committee supports decision-making through informed recommendations.

2. Functions

The Committee will:

- Identify and discuss workplace health and safety issues
- Review incident investigations and corrective actions
- Monitor the effectiveness of risk management controls
- Consider worker feedback and concerns
- Contribute to health and safety planning, training, and initiatives
- Escalate unresolved issues to senior management where necessary

3. Meetings

- The Committee will meet **at least quarterly**, or more frequently if required
- Meetings may be held in person or via appropriate electronic means
- New Zealand Council will fund any costs associated with facilitating the meeting (including travel accommodation of members if necessary). Regional Council's will ensure that the committee members are available to attend the HSC.
- A quorum will consist of at least **50% of members**, including at least one management representative

4. Agenda and Minutes

- An agenda will be circulated prior to each meeting
- Minutes will be recorded, approved, and made available to NZC, CEO and all Fish & Game staff
- Actions and responsibilities will be clearly documented and tracked

5. Decision-Making

- The Committee will aim to reach decisions by consensus
- Where consensus cannot be reached, differing views will be recorded and referred to management

6. Training and Support

- Committee members (HSR's) will be required to undertake NZQA approved health and safety training (Stage 1). This is a two-day course explaining the roles and responsibilities of Health and Safety representative under New Zealand Law.
- NZC will fund the cost of the training and any related travel/ accommodation costs. Each region will be responsible for giving staff representatives time off to undertake training and backfilling their work.
- Committee members will be provided with adequate time, resources, and information to perform their roles effectively
- Only HSRs who have successfully completed initial training can issue a Provisional Improvement Notice (PIN) or tell staff to cease unsafe work.

- Training introduces HSRs to HSWA and other legal concepts. It also covers other knowledge and skills HSRs need so that they can represent staff effectively.
- Trained HSRs will know about health and safety. They will be aware of the rights and responsibilities of everyone in the workplace.
- An HSR who has not attended training can still carry out HSR functions. However, they cannot issue a PIN or direct unsafe work to cease.

7. Confidentiality

Committee members must respect the confidentiality of sensitive information discussed, particularly personal or employment-related matters.

COO Report

New Zealand Fish and Game Council Meeting 180: 28 Feb & 1 Mar 2026

Prepared by: Richie Cosgrove, COO, NZ Fish and Game Council

Kōrero taunaki - Summary of considerations

Purpose

This report to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council provides an update on other matters that the Chief Operating Officer has been involved with.

Financial considerations

Nil Budgetary provision / Unbudgeted

Risk

Low Medium High Extreme

Ngā taunaki – CEO Recommends

CCO recommend the following motion:

That the New Zealand Fish and Game Council:

1. Receive the information.

Executive Summary - Whakarāpopoto

- 1 It's been a very busy three months since the last NZC meeting. The team returned early in the new year and has made significant progress across engagement, advocacy, enforcement, and operations. This report covers work in five key themes: community engagement and partnerships, public profile and advocacy, legal enforcement, organisational development and includes the finance reports for clarity on the suggestion of the governance advisor. In addition, I note current projects and upcoming work.

Introduction

- 2 The period since the last Council meeting has seen significant change in the NZC team with the resignation of Rosamund Connelly and the hiring of

her replacement Lesley Gould. Both will be in attendance at meeting 180 during the handover process.

- 3 Lesley comes to us with a fisheries management background from working with MPI, and representation at the international level for fisheries management in the Pacific. We have engaged Rosamund with some casual work around a number of projects, such as the gazetting of the infringement system, so she will still remain somewhat connected to the Fish & Game team.

The team has been busy across all fronts around the RMA reforms, Arms Act changes and other legislative reforms such as the life jacket amendments. There has been significant engagement with our licence holders and the wider public over these topics.

Discussion - Kōrerorero

Community Engagement and Partnerships

4.1 Firearms Community Training Working Group

This Working group has been formed to enable community organisations (gun clubs etc) to be able to undertake the firearms safety component of the firearms licencing system. The group is rapidly progressing with the framework development at we will be aiming to achieve a pilot trial before the end of the year.

4.2 Regional Engagement

A key engagement over the last few weeks has been providing support to the Nelson Marlborough Fish & Game Council as navigate the implication of the Nelson Tenth's court settlement. The team at Nelson Marlborough have shown a constructive approach to this unforeseen situation and should be applauded for how they are engaging with the process in front of them.

Regional visits provide invaluable insights into operations on the ground, and I was lucky to visit a joint North Canterbury, CSI, and Eastern Fish & Game team assisting MPI with its HPAI swabbing programme at Lake Ellesmere recently. It was great to see the skills being shared across the team and the knowledge gained in undertaking an operation rarely done in the South Island.

The NZC CFO, Jill Meunch, has provided support and assistance to the West Coast team over issues raised by the statutory entities team at the Department of Conservation around the West Coast audit. The issue has highlighted a significant issue with the auditors and Jill, and I have had meetings with the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) over the recent regional Auditors. The OAG has directed that any region that experiences issues with their audits in future alert me, and I will contact the OAG so that these issues can be resolved quickly with the OAG's guidance.

Public Profile and Advocacy

5.3 Public Profile and Advocacy

1. RMA campaign - The team has been running a campaign to push submissions for Resource Management reforms. Detail in the CEO report.
2. Communications and Digital Engagement

Since the ReWild campaign launched on November 7th 2023, we've served **11,060,445** impressions across all media channels (Facebook, Instagram and YouTube). This number excludes Stuff and NZ Herald.

We have reached **1,321,199** unique people on average **8.17** times each, with over **217,027** engagements across our media channels (reactions/likes, comments, shares, clicks, views, 3 second video views, competition entries), we have been flooded with support from Kiwis who share our love of wild places and now back our work.

During January we served **78,811** impressions and reached **44,110** unique people. We had **12,522** content interactions, including reactions/likes, comments, shares, saves and link clicks. Additionally, our Facebook currently has **24k** followers on Facebook and **5,789** on Instagram.

5.4 R3 paper

Following the last NZC meeting we consulted regions on interest in participating in a pilot R3 implementation programme. No regions offered to participate in the pilot. However, given the vital importance of this work to Fish & Game's future, it needs to be advanced. Most regions are already undertaking R3 activities; this strategy aims to ensure such work is prioritised, more consistent across the organisation, and formally included in regional work programmes. A new paper will be presented to Council for meeting 181.

Legal Enforcement and Compliance

6.1 Regulations

The Minister has our 2026 Hunters Notice before him for approval following the submission of it shortly after NZC meeting 179. We hope to receive an approved version shortly to keep within the very strict timings for the game bird season. The regions have been collating their requirements for regulation booklets, and the preparations for licence sales on 12 March are well underway (subject to the Minister's approval).

6.2 Ranger Recruitment

Several regions have inducted new Honorary Rangers in the last few months. It is excellent to see this support for one of our core critical components from licence holders. More regions are also currently inducting new recruits as well.

6.3 Game Bird season Ranger preparations

There have been ranger coordination meetings for joint operations with NZ Police and the Firearms Safety Authority held in preparation for opening weekend.

The Firearms safety messaging this year will be around hearing protection, as ACC stats show game bird hunting as a significant contributor to hearing loss when ear protection is not used or poorly used. They will also be promoting safe storage and transport of firearms again. The Firearms Safety Authority has around \$60,000 earmarked for advertising in the lead-up to opening weekend.

Organisational Development

7.2 Staff Performance Reviews

The next six-monthly NZC staff performance reviews will be completed in the coming weeks, ensuring our team remains supported and aligned with organisational objectives.

Meetings and Stakeholder Engagement

8. Regular engagement continues across multiple fronts including:
 - Attendance at a MPI HPAI exercise in Dunedin just before Christmas, engagement with MPI over HPAI updates,
 - Fish & Game has hosted a series of webinars in the first part of 2026, focused primarily on Resource Management reform and the upcoming submission deadline.
 - **Resource Management reform – NZC webinar** Tuesday, 20 January 2026, 7–8.30pm (online). Hosted for New Zealand Council members, covering Fish & Game's position on the Natural Environment Bill and Planning Bill ahead of the 13 February submission deadline.
 - **Resource Management reform – staff webinar** Thursday, 29 January 2026, 3.15–4.30pm (online). An internal session to brief staff on the RM reform bills and Fish & Game's advocacy priorities.
 - **Resource Management reform – regional council and licence holder webinars** Thursday, 5 February 2026, 6–7pm (online). Public-facing sessions for regional councillors and licence holders on the reform proposals and how to engage with the submission process.
 - **National wastewater standards – what they mean for Fish & Game** Monday, 9 February 2026, 1–2.30pm (online). Presented by Kate McArthur (KM Water), this session covered the new national wastewater standards and how staff can apply them when commenting on wastewater treatment plant consent conditions.
 - External meetings, including the Hunting sector pre hunting season planning, DOC meetings regarding black swans, ministerial meeting regarding fishing Hunters Notice, and sessions with MPI, MFE, eNGOs, and Police Commissioners' Firearms Community Advisory Forum
 - Appearance at the Select committee hearing on life jacket regulation changes for children, you can read our submission [here](#).

Finance Reports

9.1 Finance reports

Following discussion with the Governance Advisor, Graeme Nahkies, our finance reports are attached as appendices. This includes the Variance report (late paper due to Southland audit being late) and the Reserves Report.

Also attached is a cover paper on the Strategic pay indications of where salary movements are and a detailed report will be provided before the April Meeting.

Current Projects and Upcoming Work

10.1 Licence System replacement project

I will be facilitating a working group day in Wellington on March 12 with members of the licence working party and outside contractors' and advisors to expedite this project. We still have till August 2027 before the current licence system contract expires.

Conclusion

This period has been busy, with the NZC team demonstrating progress across all aspects of our work – from innovative partnerships and media engagement to enforcement outcomes. The impact we are having by engaging with Fish & Game, our stakeholders, and the wider community, and the tangible outcomes we're achieving show us making a real difference for New Zealand's fishing and hunting communities. As always, I'm happy to take any questions on these and other matters in the meeting.

December 25
NZC Finance Report 31 December 2025

Prepared by: Jill Muench, Finance Manager, NZ Fish and Game Council

Kōrero taunaki - Summary of considerations

Purpose

This report to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council presents the NZC Finance Report for the 4 months ended 31 December 2025.

Financial considerations

Nil Budgetary provision / Unbudgeted

Risk

Low Medium High Extreme

Ngā taunaki – CEO Recommendations

The ACEO recommends the following motion:

That the New Zealand Fish and Game Council:

1. Receive the NZC Finance Report for the 4 months ended 31 December 2025 with a deficit of \$154,460.

Executive Summary - Whakarāpopoto

- 1 For the 4-month period ended 31 December 2025, the combined NZC and National Budget presents a deficit of \$154,460 against a YTD Budget Deficit of \$339,496.
- 2 The NZC only budget reports a surplus of \$355,323 against a total budget of \$1,456,724
- 3 The National only budget reports a deficit of \$1509,783 against a total budget of deficit of \$1,298,911

Background - Takenga mai

- 4 This paper includes the following attachments:
 - Table 1: Statement of Financial Performance for the 4 months ended 31 December 2025
 - Table 2: Statement of Financial Performance – NZC only to 31 December 2025
 - Table 3: Statement of Financial Performance – National only to 31 December 2025
 - Table 4: Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2025
 - Table 5: Aged Receivables Summary as at 31 December 2025
 - Table 6: Aged Payables Summary as at 31 December 2025
 - Table 7: Research Fund as at 31 December 2025
 - Table 8: Staff Development Fund as at 31 December 2025

Funding of \$386,000 from reserves was approved by the Council at meeting 175, made up as follows:

Meeting	\$	Explanation
175 August 25	100,000	Research Position
175 August 25	100,000	Top-up of RMA Reserve
175 August 25	50,000	Top-up of Research Fund
175 August 25	50,000	Additional Postage National Magazine
175 August 25	50,000	Licence contract renewal
175 August 25	36,000	Licence Production
	386,000	TOTAL FUNDED FROM RESERVES 2025-26

5 The Split between the NZC and National Costs are:

	Actual YTD	Full Year Budget
Table 2 - NZC	355,323	2,220,519
Table 3 - National	(509, 783)	(1,774,715)
Total as per Table 1	(154,460)	(445,806)
Table 1 - Combined	(154,460)	(445,806)

Discussion - Kōrerorero

Statement of Financial Performance

6 Income

6.1 Levies for the 4 months to 31 December 2025 are \$1,024,332 – 112% of the YTD budget.

6.2 Other income of \$26,559 has been received. This includes Contract Income \$15,138, Advertising and Merchandise (\$379) and Magazine Contributions (\$10,781).

7 **Grants** – paid to regions of \$185,818 are at 93% of the YTD budget.

8 **Outputs – Advocacy.** The total Advocacy Budget YTD is \$101,860. YTD, the Actual Expenditure on this budget is \$88,997 or 87% of the budget. Projects to Note:

9 National Public Awareness - \$7,527 compared to a YTD budget of 8,396.

9.1 \$22,410 has been reimbursed to Regions for RMA projects YTD. The main projects funded include The Fish and Game Bill (NZC) \$20k and Phase 3 RMS Reform (NZC) \$2k. Please refer to the RMA paper that has a full list of the committed resources within RMA.

9.2 The YTD Budget for Marketing and Social Licence budget is \$43,332. YTD expenditure as at 31 December 2025 is \$13,440. This represents 31% of the budget spent.

10 **Outputs – Research** –YTD budget \$16,668 – spending YTD \$0`

11 Research fund commitments as at 31 December 2025 are \$172,444, with \$99,500 available for distribution. See Table 7 for a summary of spending and commitments for the Research fund as at 31 December 2025.

12 **Outputs – Co-ordination** – YTD Budget \$572,184 – YTD spend 84% of Budget \$481,166.

- 12.1 Co-ordination – Administration/HR – YTD spent \$4,301 - these costs include the monthly costs for the EAP service, which supports all Fish and Game staff when required.
- 12.2 Co-ordination RMA – YTD budget of \$6,366, which covers the WestLaw subscription and \$10k towards training (of which \$1,387 has been spent as at 31 December 2025).
- 12.3 The Game Regulations YTD spend is \$7,822 (YTD budget \$16,000).
- 12.4 The Staff Development Grant allocates \$10,000 per annum towards staff scholarships for conferences, etc. The costs YTD relate to one project – Jayde Couper \$13,682.
- 12.5 Website and Social Media costs are 98% of YTD budget, having spent \$34,883 YTD compared to the budget of \$35,484.
- 12.6 Ranger Co-ordination costs of \$14,590 include the Cert Training held in Cromwell, Nelson, Rotorua and Dunedin during September to November 2025.
- 12.7 Licencing costs of \$258,431 are at 106% of YTD budget and include the Licence Audit fee, Licence Contract, production/distribution of the Licence and support from Eastern to coordinate the Licencing system.

13 **Outputs – Governance**

- 13.1 New Zealand Council expenses YTD are \$21,355 – which is 135% of the YTD budget. There has been one meeting (December) with a further four planned.
- 13.2 Governance Advice and Performance \$0 YTD. YTD Budget \$5,000. Costs in this area relate to Legal opinions requested.

14 **Outputs – Ministerial Review Implementation.** YTD \$16,568 spent vs a \$22k YTD budget.

The major project costs include \$11,125 for the Governance Advisor and \$5,443 for the Review of the Annual Report.

15 **Outputs – Overheads.** Total overheads are \$495,558 (108% of the YTD budget).

Statement of Financial Position – refer Table 4

- 16 **Current Assets** – Total \$2.663M, this includes \$(1,491) for Accounts Receivable – see Table 5.
- 17 **Total Liabilities** are \$458,390 – this includes \$137,647 for Accounts payable – refer to Table 6.

- 18 Restricted Reserves include the NAS, Research, RMA and Staff Development funds – these represent the funds that the NZC have committed to these funds. Total Restricted Reserves are \$754,908. See Tables 7 and 8 for the Research and Staff Development Reserves. Refer to the RMA paper for the table for the RMA/Legal Fund.

Risks and mitigations

- 19 At this stage, most expenditures are within Budget – however, close monitoring of budgets is required to ensure this remains the case at year end.

Table 1: Statement of Financial Performance

New Zealand Fish and Game Council For the 4 months ended 31 December 2025

	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE %	FULL YEAR BUDGET
INCOME				
Levies	1,024,332	916,129	112%	3,664,515
Interest Income	7,665	13,216	58%	39,646
Other income				
Advertising & Merchandise	379	9,996	4%	30,000
Contract Income	15,138	4,000	378%	12,000
Magazine Contributions	10,781	-	-	110,000
Sale of Fish and Game Cookbook	301	-	-	-
Total Other income	26,599	13,996	190%	152,000
Total INCOME	1,058,596	943,341	112%	3,856,161
GRANTS TO REGIONS				
Grants to Regions	185,818	199,684	93%	798,736
Total GRANTS TO REGIONS	185,818	199,684	93%	798,736
OUTPUTS				
ADVOCACY				
Advocacy - Legal & Specialist Advice	28,823	16,800	172%	55,400
National Public Awareness	7,527	8,396	90%	25,191
National Magazine	400	-	-	348,000
RMA/Legal	38,806	33,332	116%	100,000
Marketing & Social Licence	13,440	43,332	31%	130,000
Total ADVOCACY	88,997	101,860	87%	658,591
RESEARCH				
Research Programme	-	16,668	-	50,000
Research - Optimisation Model	-	15,000	-	45,000
Research - Phd Programme	-	25,000	-	25,000
Total RESEARCH	-	56,668	-	120,000
CO-ORDINATION				
Marketing	2,191	-	-	-
Business & Financial Support	9,750	26,668	37%	80,004
Co-ordination National - CEO Travel	7,592	5,332	142%	15,996
Co-ordination - Administration/HR/HS	4,301	13,288	32%	39,865
Co-ordination - Species - Game	500	-	-	-
Co-ordination - RMA	1,387	6,336	22%	19,000
Fishing & Hunting Regulations	7,822	16,000	49%	32,000
Information Technology- National	21,880	26,716	82%	80,150
Maritime NZ Compliance	-	6,000	-	18,000
Manager Meetings	8,161	10,668	76%	32,000
Staff Development Grant	13,682	2,500	547%	10,000
Youth Education Programme	7,090	7,000	101%	7,000

Table 1: Statement of Financial Performance

	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE %	FULL YEAR BUDGET
Website and Social Media	34,883	35,484	98%	106,450
Ranger Co-ordination	14,590	13,168	111%	39,500
Licencing	258,341	244,496	106%	721,500
Total CO-ORDINATION	392,169	413,656	95%	1,201,465
Total OUTPUTS	481,166	572,184	84%	1,980,056
GOVERNANCE				
New Zealand Council	21,355	15,875	135%	63,500
NZC Chair Travel & Advocacy	1,439	1,750	82%	7,000
Governance Advice & Performance	-	5,000	-	20,000
Governors Forum	-	3,000	-	12,000
Regional Audit	11,154	3,750	297%	15,000
Total GOVERNANCE	33,947	29,375	116%	117,500
MINISTERIAL REVIEW IMPEMETATION				
Governance Training Program	-	8,750	-	35,000
Leadership & Cultural Training - Review	-	2,500	-	10,000
Governance Advisor	11,125	11,250	99%	32,500
Consolidated Annual report - Review	5,443	-	-	10,000
Total MINISTERIAL REVIEW IMPEMETATION	16,568	22,500	74%	87,500
OVERHEADS				
Salaries & Contractors	436,012	394,618	110%	1,140,008
Staff Expenses	10,368	17,896	58%	49,900
Office Premises	16,259	19,028	85%	57,100
Office Equipment	5	500	1%	2,000
Communications/Consumables	3,722	8,064	46%	24,200
General (inc Insurance)	6,811	9,532	71%	16,600
Financial Audit Fee	12,700	7,000	181%	21,000
Vehicle Expenses	3,901	-	-	-
Depreciation	5,781	2,456	235%	7,367
Total OVERHEADS	495,558	459,094	108%	1,318,175
Total Expenses	1,213,056	1,282,837	95%	4,301,967
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(154,460)	(339,496)	45%	(445,806)

Table 2: Statement of Financial Performance- NZC Budget only

New Zealand Fish and Game Council
For the 4 months ended 31 December 2025

Region is NZC.

	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE %	FULL YEAR BUDGET
INCOME				
Levies	960,673	916,129	105%	3,664,515
Interest Income	7,665	13,216	58%	39,646
Other income				
Advertising & Merchandise	-	9,996	-	30,000
Contract Income	12,000	4,000	300%	12,000
Magazine Contributions	-	-	-	110,000
Total Other income	12,000	13,996	86%	152,000
Total INCOME	980,338	943,341	104%	3,856,161
GRANTS TO REGIONS				
Grants to Regions	139,769	199,684	70%	798,736
Total GRANTS TO REGIONS	139,769	199,684	70%	798,736
OUTPUTS				
ADVOCACY				
Advocacy - Legal & Specialist Advice	24,618	16,800	147%	55,400
National Public Awareness	33	8,396	0%	25,191
National Magazine	-	-	-	348,000
RMA/Legal	-	33,332	-	100,000
Marketing & Social Licence	-	43,332	-	130,000
Total ADVOCACY	24,651	101,860	24%	658,591
RESEARCH	-	16,668	-	50,000
CO-ORDINATION				
Business & Financial Support	5,550	26,668	21%	80,004
Co-ordination National - CEO Travel	87	5,332	2%	15,996
Co-ordination - Administration/HR/HS	(11)	13,288	0%	39,865
Co-ordination - RMA	-	6,336	-	19,000
Fishing & Hunting Regulations	-	16,000	-	32,000
Information Technology- National	-	26,716	-	80,150
Maritime NZ Compliance	-	6,000	-	18,000
Manager Meetings	555	10,668	5%	32,000
Staff Development Grant	-	2,500	-	10,000
Youth Education Programme	-	7,000	-	7,000
Website and Social Media	-	35,484	-	106,450
Ranger Co-ordination	-	4,000	-	12,000

Table 2: Statement of Financial Performance- NZC Budget only

	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE %	FULL YEAR BUDGET
Licensing	9,975	244,496	4%	721,500
Total CO-ORDINATION	16,155	404,488	4%	1,173,965
Total OUTPUTS	40,807	523,016	8%	1,882,556
GOVERNANCE				
New Zealand Council	21,355	15,875	135%	63,500
NZC Chair Travel & Advocacy	1,266	1,750	72%	7,000
Governance Advice & Performance	-	5,000	-	20,000
Governors Forum	-	3,000	-	12,000
Regional Audit	-	3,750	-	15,000
Total GOVERNANCE	22,620	29,375	77%	117,500
OVERHEADS				
Salaries & Contractors	363,482	394,618	92%	1,140,008
Staff Expenses	8,771	17,896	49%	49,900
Office Premises	16,259	19,028	85%	57,100
Office Equipment	-	500	-	2,000
Communications/Consumables	3,678	8,064	46%	24,200
General (inc Insurance)	6,811	9,532	71%	16,600
Financial Audit Fee	12,700	7,000	181%	21,000
Vehicle Expenses	2,557	-	-	-
Depreciation	1,968	2,456	80%	7,367
Ranger Training	-	9,168	-	27,500
Research - Phd Programme	-	25,000	-	25,000
Governance Training Program	-	8,750	-	35,000
Leadership & Cultural Training - Review	-	2,500	-	10,000
Research - Optimisation Model	-	15,000	-	45,000
Governance Advisor	375	11,250	3%	32,500
Consolidated Annual report - Review	5,218	-	-	10,000
Total OVERHEADS	421,820	530,762	79%	1,503,175
Total Expenses	625,015	1,282,837	49%	4,301,967
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	355,323	(339,496)	-105%	(445,806)

Table 3: Statement of Financial Performance- NATIONAL

New Zealand Fish and Game Council For the 4 months ended 31 December 2025

Region is National.

	YTD ACTUAL	NATIONAL BUDGET	REMAINING BUDGET	% OF BUDGET SPENT
INCOME				
Levies	63,659	3,664,515	3,600,856	2%
Interest Income	-	39,646	39,646	-
Other income				
Advertising & Merchandise	379	30,000	29,621	1%
Contract Income	3,138	12,000	8,862	26%
Magazine Contributions	10,781	110,000	99,219	10%
Sale of Fish and Game Cookbook	301	-	(301)	-
Total Other income	14,599	152,000	137,401	10%
Total INCOME	78,258	3,856,161	3,777,903	2%
GRANTS TO REGIONS				
Grants to Regions	46,049	798,736	752,687	6%
Total GRANTS TO REGIONS	46,049	798,736	752,687	6%
OUTPUTS				
ADVOCACY				
Advocacy - Legal & Specialist Advice	4,205	55,400	51,195	8%
National Public Awareness	7,494	25,191	17,697	30%
National Magazine	400	348,000	347,600	0%
RMA/Legal	38,806	100,000	61,194	39%
Marketing & Social Licence	13,440	130,000	116,560	10%
Total ADVOCACY	64,345	658,591	594,246	10%
RESEARCH				
Research Programme	-	50,000	50,000	-
Research - Phd Programme	-	25,000	25,000	-
Research - Optimisation Model	-	45,000	45,000	-
Total RESEARCH	-	120,000	120,000	-
CO-ORDINATION				
Marketing	2,191	-	(2,191)	-
Co-ordination National - CEO Travel	7,505	15,996	8,491	47%
Co-ordination - Administration/HR/HS	4,312	39,865	35,553	11%
Co-ordination - Species - Game	500	-	(500)	-
Co-ordination - RMA	1,387	19,000	17,614	7%
Fishing & Hunting Regulations	7,822	32,000	24,178	24%
Information Technology- National	21,880	80,150	58,270	27%
Maritime NZ Compliance	-	18,000	18,000	-

Table 3: Statement of Financial Performance- NATIONAL

	YTD ACTUAL	NATIONAL BUDGET	REMAINING BUDGET	% OF BUDGET SPENT
Manager Meetings	7,606	32,000	24,394	24%
Staff Development Grant	13,682	10,000	(3,682)	137%
Youth Education Programme	7,090	7,000	(90)	101%
Website and Social Media	34,883	106,450	71,567	33%
Ranger Co-ordination	14,590	39,500	24,910	37%
Licencing	248,366	721,500	473,134	34%
Total CO-ORDINATION	371,814	1,121,461	749,647	33%
Total OUTPUTS	436,159	1,900,052	1,463,893	23%
GOVERNANCE				
New Zealand Council	-	63,500	63,500	-
Governance Advice & Performance	-	20,000	20,000	-
Governors Forum	-	12,000	12,000	-
Regional Audit	11,154	15,000	3,846	74%
Total GOVERNANCE	11,154	110,500	99,346	10%
MINISTRIAL REVIEW				
Governance Training Program	-	35,000	35,000	-
Governance Advisor	10,750	32,500	21,750	33%
Consolidated Annual report - Review	225	10,000	9,775	2%
Leadership & Cultural Training - Review	-	10,000	10,000	-
Total MINISTERIAL REVIEW	10,975	87,500	76,525	13%
OVERHEADS				
Salaries & Contractors				
Salaries				
Staff Salaries	55,782	1,106,792	1,051,010	5%
Contractors Salary	15,073	-	(15,073)	-
Kiwisaver Contribution	1,673	33,216	31,543	5%
Total Salaries	72,529	1,140,008	1,067,479	6%
Total Salaries & Contractors	72,529	1,140,008	1,067,479	6%
Staff Expenses				
ACC Levy	-	1,900	1,900	-
Business & Financial Support	4,200	80,004	75,804	5%
Health & Safety (OSH)	562	18,250	17,688	3%
Staff Expenses	1,036	22,750	21,714	5%
Staff Training	-	7,000	7,000	-
Total Staff Expenses	5,798	129,904	124,106	4%
Office Premises	-	57,100	57,100	-
Office Equipment	5	2,000	1,995	0%
Communications/Consumables	44	24,200	24,157	0%
General (inc Insurance)	-	16,600	16,600	-
Financial Audit Fee	-	21,000	21,000	-
Vehicle Expenses	1,343	-	(1,343)	-
Depreciation	3,812	7,367	3,555	52%

Table 3: Statement of Financial Performance- NATIONAL

	YTD ACTUAL	NATIONAL BUDGET	REMAINING BUDGET	% OF BUDGET SPENT
NZC Chair Travel & Advocacy	173	7,000	6,827	2%
Total OVERHEADS	83,704	1,405,179	1,321,475	6%
Total Expenses	588,041	4,301,967	3,713,926	14%
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(509,783)	(445,806)	63,977	114%

Table 4: Statement of Financial Position

New Zealand Fish and Game Council As at 31 December 2025

	31 DEC 2025	31 AUG 2025
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash & Cash Equivalents		
NZ Fish and Game Council	931,363	2,072,229
NZ Fish and Game Council - Payroll '046	16,056	16,028
Serious Saver	274,960	273,053
Credit Cards	(5,315)	(9,173)
Total Cash & Cash Equivalents	1,217,064	2,352,138
Receivables		
Accounts Receivable	(1,491)	377,087
Accounts Receivable - Other	901	(17,473)
Interest Receivable	46,245	66,887
Total Receivables	45,655	426,501
Term Investments	1,389,333	416,251
Prepayments and Accrued Income	11,095	46,860
Total Current Assets	2,663,147	3,241,750
Non-current Assets		
Property, Plant & Equipment	65,892	71,673
Total Non-current Assets	65,892	71,673
Total Assets	2,729,039	3,313,423
Liabilities		
Payables		
Accounts Payable	137,647	298,535
Accruals and Prepaid Licences	9,600	272,730
PAYE Clearing	83,734	38,560
NZGBHT - Stamp Programme	155,139	154,733
GST	64,499	98,160
Total Payables	450,619	862,719
Employee Entitlements	42,365	40,816
Rounding	(133)	(133)
Non-current Liabilities		
Payroll Clearing Account	(34,462)	(15,055)
Total Non-current Liabilities	(34,462)	(15,055)
Total Liabilities	458,390	888,347
Net Assets	2,270,649	2,425,076
Equity		
Accumulated Funds		

Table 4: Statement of Financial Position

	31 DEC 2025	31 AUG 2025
Accumulated Funds	1,243,595	1,243,595
Transfer (To)/From Reserves	399,035	399,035
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(126,888)	27,539
Total Accumulated Funds	1,515,741	1,670,168
Reserves		
Dedicated reserves		
Asset Replacement Reserve	10,000	10,000
Total Dedicated reserves	10,000	10,000
Restricted Reserves		
National Anglers Survey Reserve	105,125	105,125
Research Reserve	218,705	218,705
RMA/Legal Fund Reserve	418,578	418,578
Staff Development Grant Reserves	2,500	2,500
Total Restricted Reserves	744,908	744,908
Total Reserves	754,908	754,908
Total Equity	2,270,649	2,425,076

Table 5: Aged Receivables Summary

New Zealand Fish and Game Council

As at 31 December 2025

Ageing by due date

CONTACT	CURRENT	< 1 MONTH	1 MONTH	2 MONTHS	3 MONTHS	OLDER	TOTAL
Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council	69.00	-	-	-	-	138.00	207.00
Barrie Barnes	299.93	-	-	-	-	-	299.93
Central South Island Fish and Game Council	69.00	-	-	-	-	-	69.00
Eastern Fish and Game Council	138.00	-	-	-	-	-	138.00
Nelson Marlborough Fish & Game Council	69.00	-	-	-	-	-	69.00
North Canterbury Fish and Game Council	233.38	233.38	26.37	26.38	26.38	365.28	911.17
Northland Fish and Game Council	69.00	69.00	-	-	-	69.00	207.00
NZ Police – Firearms Safety Authority	-	-	-	-	-	(3,737.50)	(3,737.50)
Southland Fish and Game Council	138.00	-	-	-	-	-	138.00
West Coast Fish and Game Council	69.00	-	-	-	-	138.00	207.00
Total	1,154.31	302.38	26.37	26.38	26.38	(3,027.22)	(1,491.40)
Percentage of total	-77.40%	-20.27%	-1.77%	-1.77%	-1.77%	202.98%	100.00%

Table 6: Aged Payables Summary

New Zealand Fish and Game Council

As at 31 December 2025

Ageing by due date

CONTACT	CURRENT	< 1 MONTH	1 MONTH	2 MONTHS	OLDER	TOTAL
Aged Payables						
Air New Zealand Travel Card	5,945.00	-	-	-	-	5,945.00
BDMA Revolution Limited	161.00	-	-	-	-	161.00
BP Oil New Zealand	489.76	-	-	-	-	489.76
Campaign Monitor	17,200.00	-	-	-	-	17,200.00
Cert Systems limited	3,647.05	-	-	-	-	3,647.05
Computer & Telephone Services Ltd	66.40	-	-	-	-	66.40
Department of Internal Affairs	157.55	-	-	-	-	157.55
Eastern Fish and Game Council	343.18	-	-	-	-	343.18
Employment Hero Pty Ltd CC	-	-	-	-	2,833.60	2,833.60
ESL	40,834.39	-	-	-	-	40,834.39
Grant Thornton	5,655.33	-	-	-	-	5,655.33
Hothouse Communications Limited	8,388.84	-	-	-	-	8,388.84
Jill Muench	-	9.00	-	-	-	9.00
Kahu Environmental Limited	10,454.94	-	-	-	-	10,454.94
Latitude Strategy and Communication Limited	2,300.00	-	-	-	-	2,300.00
Leech & Partners Ltd	4,830.00	-	-	-	-	4,830.00
Lexis Nexis DD	-	-	-	-	17.39	17.39
New Zealand Couriers	25.40	-	-	-	-	25.40
New Zealand Game Animal Council	12,458.30	-	-	-	-	12,458.30
New Zealand Mail Group	4,752.65	-	-	-	-	4,752.65
Redstripe Limited	894.71	-	-	-	-	894.71
Sandiford Print	448.50	-	-	-	-	448.50
Seek NZ Ltd	40.35	-	-	-	-	40.35
Wellington Fish and Game Council	2,576.00	-	-	-	-	2,576.00
Windcave New Zealand Limited DD	50.03	-	-	-	-	50.03
Total Aged Payables	121,719.38	9.00	-	-	2,850.99	124,579.37
Total	121,719.38	9.00	-	-	2,850.99	124,579.37
Percentage of total	97.70%	0.01%	-	-	2.29%	100.00%

Table 8: Current Staff Development Projects and Commitments

New Zealand Fish and Game Council

As at 31 December 2025

APPROVED	REGION	AWARDED TO	Amount	ACTUAL SPENT	Refund W/drawn	COMPI COMMITMENT
13/12/24	Otago	Jayde Couper- 2 Day Course Otolith prep & Techniques	14263	13263		14263
TOTAL Commitment			14263	13263		14263

Table 9: Available Funds - Staff Development Grant

Total funding available 2025/26			10,000
Less Approved			
	Jayde Couper- Meeting 171		(13263.00)
Deficit for 2025/26 To Be funded from the Research Fund			(3,263)

Reserves as at 31 August 2025

NZ Fish and Game Council Meeting 180- 28 February & 1 March 2026

Prepared by: Jill Muench, Finance Manager, NZ Fish and Game Council

Kōrero taunaki - Summary of considerations

Purpose

1. This report to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council seeks to inform the Council on the Current Reserves status of the Councils.

Financial considerations

- Nil

 Budgetary provision

 Unbudgeted

Risk

- Low

 Medium

 High

 Extreme

Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations

2. NZC Staff recommend that NZC:
 - a. Receives the information;
 - b. Note forecast 31 August 26 organisational reserves status as \$8,586,745
 - c. Note the action for NZC staff to develop an Asset Replacement/ Depreciation Policy

Purpose

3. To outline to the NZC the reserves position for each Council following the financial audit.

Background

4. The NZC has a policy that a region must have 20% or greater of their budget held in reserves. When reserves fall below this the region may apply for a top-up of reserves.
5. Reserves are calculated as:
 - a) Working Capital less the restricted reserves equals the Council's reserves (or funds available through general reserves).
 - b) Working Capital is Current Assets + Investments less Liabilities.
6. Councils have Dedicated and Restricted reserves.
7. Dedicated reserves are reserves that the Council have set aside for projects e.g. Asset replacement fund and Habitat funding. These reserves are included in the calculation of Reserves for the Council.

8. Restricted reserves are funds that are set aside for a particular purpose – but these funds have an external covenant/agreement on them – e.g. the Waikaremoana fund in Eastern that has a specified agreement of how the funds must be spent. Each of the restricted reserves commits a third party to use the funds appropriately and report on these projects.

Analysis

9. Table 1 Summaries the reserves position for each Council as at 31 August 2025
10. Total Reserves as at 31 August 2025 \$9,493,451 (2024 \$8,707,519.)

Council	Actual Reserves 31/8/25	Approved Budget 2025/26	Reserves required 20% of Budget	Top up required 20% Reserves	% of Budget after top up	% of Licence Income Levy Regions	Reserves over 30%
Northland	\$315,768	\$610,135	122,027	0	52%		132,728
Auckland/Waikato	\$392,938	\$908,714	181,743	0	43%	36%	120,324
Eastern	\$1,015,322	\$1,353,354	270,671	0	75%	72%	606,916
Hawkes Bay	\$686,441	\$534,877	106,975	0	128%	121%	499,878
Taranaki	\$338,678	\$440,861	88,172	0	77%		206,420
Wellington	\$441,767	\$874,258	174,852	0	51%		179,490
Nelson-Marlb	\$90,113	\$581,327	116,265	26,152	20%	15%	(85,131)
Nth Canterbury	\$283,044	\$1,079,731	215,946	0	26%	18%	(52,575)
West Coast	\$235,845	\$420,665	84,133	0	56%		99,671
Central SI	\$1,009,902	\$1,059,058	211,812	0	95%	56%	658,477
Otago	\$2,601,947	\$1,278,809	255,762	0	203%	109%	2,218,304
Southland	\$603,293	\$889,356	177,871	0	68%	41%	324,127
NZC & National	\$1,478,393	\$3,322,736	664,547	0	44%		365,772
TOTAL	\$9,493,451	\$13,353,882	\$2,670,776	\$26,152	71%		\$5,274,397

11. Table 2 is Summary of each Councils' Reserves by Category.
12. The Asset Replacement fund continues to be of concern for some Councils. The reasons behind this have been insufficient funding within the budgets over the past few years and in some situations the purchasing of capital items that are not included in the Asset replacement funds.
13. As at 31 August 2024 there was \$1.319 million (2024 \$1.211 million) in the Non-resident reserve. 2022/23 was the last year that Councils can earn Non-resident income as from 2023/24 the Non-resident levy is part of the licence fee.

Council	Working Capital	Asset Replacement Fund	Non Resident Reserve	Other Dedicated Reserves	Total Dedicated reserves	Restricted Reserves	Reserves Incl Ded Reserves
Northland	\$597,374	\$23,576	\$23,990	\$13,486	61,052	281,606	\$315,768
Auckland/Waikato	\$1,322,072	\$117,442	\$115,148	\$0	232,590	929,134	\$392,938
Eastern	\$1,505,747	\$14,700	\$153,252	\$77,485	245,437	490,425	\$1,015,322
Hawkes Bay	\$686,441	\$52,770	\$86,492	\$41,368	180,630	0	\$686,441
Taranaki	\$662,793	\$7,484	\$20,140	\$7,386	35,010	324,115	\$338,678
Wellington	\$659,713	\$40,420	\$63,469	\$84,970	188,859	217,946	\$441,767
Nelson-Marlb	\$206,578	\$55,123	\$160,052	\$17,864	233,039	116,465	\$90,113
Nth Canterbury	\$219,013	\$16,572	\$0	\$182,703	199,275	95,664	\$283,044
West Coast	\$235,845	\$56,502	\$13,603	\$131,333	201,438	0	\$235,845
Central SI	\$1,009,902	\$88,885	\$220,230	\$129,079	438,194	0	\$1,009,902
Otago	\$2,634,785	\$5,404	\$342,084	\$1,905,368	2,252,856	32,838	\$2,601,947
Southland	\$741,875	\$135,907	\$120,459	\$278,812	535,178	138,582	\$603,293
NZC inc Research & RI	\$2,220,802	\$10,000	\$0	\$2,500	12,500	742,409	\$1,478,393
TOTAL	\$12,702,940	\$624,785	\$1,318,919	\$2,872,354	\$4,816,058	\$3,369,184	\$9,493,451

14. Forecast Reserves for 31 August 2026 are \$8,746,440 A movement of \$747,011 (Forecast Deficit for the year) assumes that all Councils meet their licence forecast and that all Councils work within their approved budgets.
15. One Council requires a top-up of Reserves for the 2025/26 year. Nelson-Marlborough requires \$26,152 top up to meet 20%. Reserves range from 20% (Nelson Marlborough) to 203% (Otago) of the approved budget.

Council	Actual Reserves 31/8/25	Adjustment for top of reserves	Forecast Deficit for year ended 31/8/26	Forecast Reserves 31 Aug 2026	Reserves required 20% of Budget	Top up achieve 20% Reserves	% of Budget
Northland	\$315,768	\$0	(\$3,252)	\$312,516	122,027	0	51%
Auckland/Waikato	\$392,938	\$0	(\$4,844)	\$388,094	181,743	0	43%
Eastern	\$1,015,322	\$0	(\$15,172)	\$1,000,150	272,271	0	74%
Hawkes Bay	\$686,441	\$0	(\$89,387)	\$597,054	124,375	0	112%
Taranaki	\$338,678	\$0	(\$2,350)	\$336,328	88,172	0	76%
Wellington	\$441,767	\$0	(\$4,660)	\$437,107	174,852	0	50%
Nelson-Marlb	\$90,113	\$26,152	(\$3,099)	\$87,014	116,830	29,816	20%
Nth Canterbury	\$283,044	\$0	(\$44,548)	\$238,496	223,746	0	22%
West Coast	\$235,845	\$0	(\$35,315)	\$200,530	90,783	0	48%
Central SI	\$1,009,902	\$0	(\$90,192)	\$919,710	234,284	0	87%
Otago	\$2,601,947	\$0	(\$6,817)	\$2,595,130	255,762	0	203%
Southland	\$603,293	\$0	(\$45,720)	\$557,573	186,111	0	63%
NZC inc Research & RI	\$1,478,393	\$0	(\$401,655)	\$1,076,738	741,747	0	32%
TOTAL	\$9,493,451	\$26,152	(\$747,011)	\$8,746,440	\$2,812,702	\$29,816	66%

Financial Implications

16. The reserves as at 31 August 2025 are \$9.334 million.
17. The forecast reserves as at 31 August 2026 are \$8,746,440
18. One Council requires a top-up of reserves for the year ended 31 August 2026
19. Two Councils have reserves as a percentage of budget over 100%.

Policy Implications

20. Within our current policy all regions are required to have adequate reserves of 20% or greater.

Remuneration Update

New Zealand Fish and Game Council Meeting 180: 27th Feb – 1st March 2026

Prepared by: Adrienne Murray, HR & HS Advisor, NZ Fish and Game Council

Kōrero taunaki - Summary of considerations

Purpose

This report to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council seeks to inform the council on :

1. The recommended remuneration movement data that will be used for budgets for the 2027.

Financial considerations

Nil Budgetary provision / Unbudgeted

Risk

Low Medium High Extreme

Executive Summary - Whakarāpopoto

1. Recommendations for budgets require information from Strategic Pay on remuneration movements effective September 2025. This information is available to be distributed to regions for budget planning. The recommendation for the 26 – 27 year will be 2.5%.
2. Strategic Pay is the largest provider of remuneration data in New Zealand with 3 primary surveys and a number of particular industry surveys. Fish and Game use data from the following Surveys:
 - General Market
 - Public Sector and within that the Local Government Sector

Background - Takenga mai

3. The estimates for budgeting of remuneration need to be completed, but any changes to staff remuneration do not take place until 1 September. This means that we need to collect data which may be out of date by the time we come to use it, but an estimate is required for planning. This year, the estimate is **2.5%**
4. I have 2 concerns regarding this despite using the Strategic Pay data which has been derived from a large pool of organisations and jobs:

- The data base is from the September 2025 survey – this means that by September 2026 we are basing our remuneration increases on information that is 12 months (1 year) out of date
- Fish & Game does not input any of our data into the survey. This means that we rely on other organisations remuneration data and do not know where we fit in each of the salary bands for our roles

Discussion - Kōrerorero

5. Remuneration Data

The latest information available from a Strategic Pay Survey is September 2025.

The graph shows the actual market movement within groups of job sizes and projections of movements that were provided by the organisations that input to the survey

Market Movement from September 2024 – 2025.

Position	Job Size	Strategic Pay Data		Market Movement 2024 - 2025			Projections & recommended movements	CPI Dec-DEC
		Sept 25 midpoint	Range 85% to 115%	General	Private	Public		
Senior Fish and Game Officer	520	\$126,878	\$108,700 - \$147,100	2.5	1.1	2.9	2.5	3.1
Fish and Game Officer - Resource Management & Planning	490	\$119,785	103,000 - 139,300	2.5	1.1	2.9	2.5	3.1
Specialist Fish and Game Officer	440	\$105,239	91,200 - 123,400	2.5	1.1	2.9	2.5	3.1
Experienced Fish and Game Officer	437	\$104,445	90,500 - 122,500	2.5	1.1	2.9	2.5	3.1
Administration Manager	343	\$82,206	71,600 - 96,900	0	2.1	3.8	2.6	3.1
Novice Fish and Game Officer	333	\$80,021	69,700 - 94,300	3.8	2.1	3.8	2.6	3.1

6. I have used the projections and recommended movements as the basis for my recommendation of 2.5%
7. I understand from Strategic Pay consultants that Fish & Game has not input any data into the September or March survey but does purchase a copy of the survey and uses the data from it which relates to the job sizes and markets within which we work.
8. I will work with Strategic Pay and our regions to:
 - enable the regions to directly input data into the survey
 - the regions receive information that directly relates to the range of salaries across the different job sizes; and

- NZC receive a consolidated report (not identifying any region) to be able to plan for the legislated changes.
9. Strategic Pay advise that this would be easy to achieve and ensure that Fish & Game data is included in their survey thus, the opportunity for more accurate information both for Regions and NZC
 10. A further step is to support Regions to provide to Strategic Pay the full range of salary and benefits which make up “Fixed Remuneration” for individuals. Note that the data does not include names, only the position and points size. This supports privacy requirements.

“Fixed Remuneration is all payments excluding government required KiwiSaver and long-term incentives and Bonus payments

11. To achieve this, we would:
 - Provide a communication to Regions advising the benefits of inputting data to the survey and that NZC office will not receive any individual information.
 - Strategic Pay to provide a worksheet that is directly linked to their data collection for the March 2026 survey
 - NZC to receive a consolidated view of remuneration including a “bell curve” graph for each job sign prepared by Strategic Pay showing where on the curve our salaries are.
 - Our remuneration policy states that 100% is our “fully capable level” and therefore our bell curve should cluster around 100% with may be a few outliers under 90% and/or over 105%
12. I am unable to provide this information to NZC without completing this piece of work.

Considerations for decision-making - Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga

Financial Implications

13. There is approved budget for involvement in Strategic Pay survey

Legislative Implications

- 14 The review of the Remuneration Policy supports the legislative Amendments that are proposed

Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities

- 15 There are no Treaty implications

Policy Implications

16. This fits with Organisation Strategy and Policy

Risks and mitigations

17. Data input to the survey enables Fish & Game to better understand the remuneration relativity to other organisations and across the organisation.
18. The risk of not doing this review is that we have less reliable information on which to base remuneration movements, and therefore our relativity in the market

Consultation

19. Regions will be consulted once so that the review is provided.

Licence Sales Update

New Zealand Fish and Game Council Meeting 180

Prepared by: Kate Thompson, Eastern Fish & Game Council, Licence Working Party

Kōrero taunaki - Summary of considerations

1.0 Purpose

To inform the New Zealand Fish and Game Council of progress on licence sales year to date and compare results to the same period of prior seasons.

2.0 Fish Licence Sales 2025-26 Season YTD (Appendix 1)

- 2.1 National fish licence LEQ's reported for 2025-26 season year-to-date (YTD) to 15 February are 2.0% (1,265 LEQ's) behind of sales reported for the same period of the 2024-25 season. (*Appendix 1*)
- 2.2 This decline represents a revenue reduction of \$171,580 compared to prior year. The budget for the 2025-26 year is lower than complete season sales for 2024-25. Therefore, if the current variance continues, the forecast for the complete season will be approximately 1% below budget, equating to an estimated shortfall of \$95,000.
- 2.3 The primary contributor to the decline is reduced family licence sales, valued at \$433,360. This has been partially offset by an increase in the other adult season categories of \$153,132. In participation terms, this reflects a minimum reduction of 4,910 (2455 family licences) adults previously covered under family licences, alongside an increase 1,185 adults purchasing licences in other season categories.
- 2.4 It was anticipated that some non-eligible family members would return to purchase alternative licences over the summer period. However, sales of short break and day licences are also below the prior season, down 168 and 455 respectively. Adverse weather conditions during the January holiday period may have contributed to this result.
- 2.5 Positively, sales across non-resident categories have increased this season, potentially reflecting growth in tourism activity across New Zealand. Adult season non-resident licence sales have increased by 357, while non-resident day licences are up 976. Growth is also seen in the junior and child non-resident categories.

4.0 Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations

NZC Staff recommend the following motion:

That Council receive the information.

Appendix 1: National Fish Licence Sales Comparison 2024-25 vs 2023-24 YTD to 10 August

National Fish Licence Sales YTD to 15 February																							Total Fish	Fish LEQ	Fish Var	Fish \$	Inc/Dec
Channel	FWF	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FWIA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWC	FWNC	FDNC	SRSE	DWLR	DWLN							
Northland	Public Online	42	109	97	12	10	0	2	19	86	120	26	6	23	7	75	6	3	0	0	0	643					
	Agency Online	8	32	6	8	2	0	0	0	4	1	4	0	0	0	3	1	0	3	5	0	77					
	Total	50	141	103	20	12	0	2	19	90	121	30	6	23	7	78	7	3	3	5	0	720	476		\$64,528		
2024-2025	Public Online	32	119	107	9	7	0	4	19	77	106	35	9	24	1	65	4	1	0	0	0	619					
	Agency Online	5	43	6	7	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	5	2	0	80					
	Total	37	162	113	16	9	0	4	20	78	108	35	9	25	1	70	4	1	5	2	0	699	488	2.6%	\$66,174	\$1,646	
2025-2026	Public Online	402	944	156	185	119	0	13	112	661	387	270	10	140	6	639	4	2	0	0	0	4,050					
	Agency Online	142	449	34	101	39	0	5	53	90	22	57	0	10	0	60	1	0	24	23	0	1,110					
	Total	544	1393	190	286	158	0	18	165	751	409	327	10	150	6	699	5	2	24	23	0	5,160	3,169		\$429,855		
Auckland Waikato	Public Online	316	951	192	164	92	0	11	87	687	359	295	16	163	7	667	13	2	0	0	0	4,022					
	Agency Online	149	526	54	102	54	0	2	29	67	22	87	2	2	2	74	0	0	12	28	0	1,212					
	Total	465	1477	246	266	146	0	13	116	754	381	382	18	165	9	741	13	2	12	28	0	5,234	3,210	1.3%	\$435,445	\$5,590	
Eastern	Public Online	1,280	1,066	156	288	645	0	30	465	1,814	577	291	16	248	31	1,147	9	9	0	0	0	8,072					
	Agency Online	850	739	75	239	823	0	16	110	348	223	173	3	78	10	50	2	2	33	21	13	3,808					
	Total	2130	1805	231	527	1468	0	46	575	2162	800	464	19	326	41	1197	11	11	33	21	13	11,880	7,504		\$1,017,966		
2024-2025	Public Online	964	1,199	230	289	718	0	29	455	1,618	692	377	19	308	25	1,169	13	18	0	0	0	8,123					
	Agency Online	762	765	69	229	906	0	10	85	257	151	168	3	55	8	50	2	14	26	27	20	3,607					
	Total	1726	1964	299	518	1624	0	39	540	1875	843	545	22	363	33	1219	15	32	26	27	20	11,730	7,341	-2.2%	\$995,862	-\$22,104	
2025-2026	Public Online	213	592	163	111	98	0	13	110	296	218	234	7	89	4	461	2	6	0	0	0	2,617					
	Agency Online	110	353	93	131	76	0	4	25	87	244	89	1	10	1	77	0	0	6	15	53	1,375					
	Total	323	945	256	242	174	0	17	135	383	462	323	8	99	5	538	2	6	6	15	53	3,992	2,461		\$333,877		
Hawke's Bay	Public Online	176	581	150	107	119	0	5	105	338	291	244	9	113	4	455	8	3	0	0	0	2,708					
	Agency Online	94	421	70	132	55	0	2	29	53	170	112	1	13	2	47	0	0	9	13	52	1,275					
	Total	270	1002	220	239	174	0	7	134	391	461	356	10	126	6	502	8	3	9	13	52	3,983	2,388	-3.0%	\$323,944	-\$9,933	
Taranaki	Public Online	85	259	108	43	18	0	0	34	120	226	81	6	52	3	378	1	2	0	0	0	1,416					
	Agency Online	34	151	7	51	15	0	2	10	21	11	53	0	6	0	63	0	0	6	7	0	437					
	Total	119	410	115	94	33	0	2	44	141	237	134	6	58	3	441	1	2	6	7	0	1,853	1,000		\$135,636		
2024-2025	Public Online	69	262	149	44	29	0	1	23	133	293	83	18	35	8	418	6	1	0	0	0	1,572					
	Agency Online	35	156	4	50	22	0	0	12	17	6	64	0	7	0	59	0	0	12	5	0	449					
	Total	104	418	153	94	51	0	1	35	150	299	147	18	42	8	477	6	1	12	5	0	2,021	1,089	8.9%	\$147,763	\$12,128	
2025-2026	Public Online	237	765	49	172	156	0	2	39	295	92	277	1	87	2	631	1	0	0	226	38	3,070					
	Agency Online	121	539	12	155	111	0	2	6	100	6	193	2	52	0	177	0	0	29	58	1	1,564					
	Total	358	1304	61	327	267	0	4	45	395	98	470	3	139	2	808	1	0	29	284	39	4,634	2,575		\$349,255		
Wellington	Public Online	172	789	58	173	115	0	4	53	277	84	295	5	94	5	588	1	4	0	236	40	2,993					
	Agency Online	114	554	6	146	94	0	2	11	37	21	139	0	60	0	148	0	0	21	34	0	1,387					
	Total	286	1343	64	319	209	0	6	64	314	105	434	5	154	5	736	1	4	21	270	40	4,380	2,464	-4.3%	\$334,232	-\$15,023	
Nelson/Marl	Public Online	348	614	197	142	118	0	6	56	340	314	239	10	128	6	595	8	1	0	817	173	4,112					
	Agency Online	310	718	202	213	102	0	4	26	70	191	112	7	21	1	135	0	5	186	818	286	3,407					
	Total	658	1332	399	355	220	0	10	82	410	505	351	17	149	7	730	8	6	186	1635	459	7,519	3,668		\$497,637		
2024-2025	Public Online	268	596	260	157	113	0	8	58	398	286	214	9	126	5	644	5	1	0	802	213	4,163					
	Agency Online	282	641	161	229	71	0	4	15	54	207	110	4	13	2	90	0	0	156	760	266	3,065					
	Total	550	1237	421	386	184	0	12	73	452	493	324	13	139	7	734	5	1	156	1562	479	7,228	3,462	-5.6%	\$469,600	-\$28,037	
2025-2026	Public Online	1,000	1,770	179	340	113	0	14	161	963	373	478	8	259	9	1,742	3	4	2,171	1,428	424	11,439					
	Agency Online	1,368	2,363	128	816	65	0	16	87	206	45	274	2	36	2	153	5	0	2,826	1,537	8	9,937					
	Total	2368	4133	307	1156	178	0	30	248	1169	418	752	10	295	11	1895	8	4	4997	2965	432	21,376	9,442		\$1,280,828		
North Canterbury	Public Online	741	1,749	188	320	120	0	14	185	964	520	508	5	219	10	1,592	7	5	1,702	1,358	382	10,589					
	Agency Online	1,003	2,611	127	875	46	0	8	64	151	63	318	5	21	2	120	6	1	2,278	1,468	2	9,169					
	Total	1744	4360	315	1195	166	0	22	249	1115	583	826	10	240	12	1712	13	6	3980	2826	384	19,758	8,935	-5.4%	\$1,212,114	-\$68,714	
2025-2026	Public Online	302	445	155	79	103	0	9	98	285	229	166	6	59	3	461	3	4	0	584	122	3,113					
	Agency Online	75	161	9	53	59	0	4	10	11	114	48	2	3	11	13	0	12	45	51	0	681					
	Total	377	606	164	132	162	0	13	108	296	343	214	8	62	14	474	3	16	45	635	122	3,794	1,855		\$251,573		
West Coast	Public Online	241	434	176	89	84	0	7	92	283	270	146	16	49	6												

Channel		FWF	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FWIA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWC	FWNC	FDNC	SRSE	DWLR	DWLN	Total Fish	Fish LEQ	Fish Var	Fish \$	Inc/Dec
Central South Is	Public Online	1,464	1,700	377	337	410	0	54	547	2,262	985	586	26	392	30	1,744	19	26	2,159	0	0	13,118				
	Agency Online	1,360	1,492	44	665	541	0	26	235	693	344	385	12	108	25	289	2	40	1,810	174	7	8,252				
	Total	2824	3192	421	1002	951	0	80	782	2955	1329	971	38	500	55	2033	21	66	3969	174	7	21,370	10,595		\$1,437,232	
2024-2025	Public Online	1,284	1,806	454	324	413	0	52	647	2,382	1,225	654	32	369	25	1,797	15	17	1,780	0	0	13,276				
	Agency Online	1,133	1,490	53	652	630	0	22	167	610	444	420	9	91	44	284	4	33	1,299	105	0	7,490				
	Total	2417	3296	507	976	1043	0	74	814	2992	1669	1074	41	460	69	2081	19	50	3079	105	0	20,766	10,485	-1.0%	\$1,422,281	-\$14,951
2025-2026	Public Online	1,944	2,493	490	359	392	0	38	349	1,975	1,636	727	47	285	104	1,959	22	62	0	1,512	461	14,855				
	Agency Online	1,750	2,559	153	809	544	0	18	95	304	424	429	15	41	32	47	6	23	377	1,146	168	8,550				
	Total	3694	5052	643	1168	546	0	56	444	2279	2060	1156	62	326	136	2006	28	85	377	2658	629	23,405	13,775		\$1,868,597	
Otago	Public Online	1,674	2,688	521	425	440	0	45	324	2,002	1,944	785	58	266	152	2,125	35	100	0	1,428	524	15,536				
	Agency Online	1,612	2,618	153	854	163	0	13	64	233	479	378	20	33	41	45	0	47	313	1,197	158	8,421				
	Total	3286	5306	674	1279	603	0	58	388	2235	2423	1163	78	299	193	2170	35	147	313	2625	682	23,957	13,780	0.0%	\$1,869,291	\$695
2024-2025	Public Online	705	895	658	125	177	0	15	206	699	903	399	20	110	28	929	6	14	0	894	401	7,184				
	Agency Online	1,197	1,538	24	460	146	0	7	78	193	97	421	5	27	2	65	1	3	132	783	2	5,181				
	Total	1902	2433	682	585	323	0	22	284	892	1000	820	25	137	30	994	7	17	132	1677	403	12,365	7,535		\$1,022,201	
2025-2026	Public Online	606	893	707	109	175	0	7	179	634	968	405	26	86	33	887	14	17	0	856	476	7,078				
	Agency Online	1,093	1,551	31	513	139	0	10	47	165	103	408	4	21	5	43	2	3	133	777	4	5,052				
	Total	1699	2444	738	622	314	0	17	226	799	1071	813	30	107	38	930	16	20	133	1633	480	12,130	7,385	-2.0%	\$1,001,830	-\$20,371
TOTAL	Direct	8,022	11,652	2,785	2,193	2,359	0	196	2,196	9,796	6,060	3,774	163	1,872	233	10,761	84	133	4,330	5,461	1,619	73,689				
	AOL	7,325	11,094	787	3,701	2,133	0	104	735	2,127	1,722	2,238	49	392	84	1,132	18	85	5,477	4,638	538	44,379				
	Total	15,347	22,746	3,572	5,894	4,492	0	300	2,931	11,923	7,782	6,012	212	2,264	317	11,893	102	218	9,807	10,099	2,157	118,068	64,055		\$8,689,183	
2024-2025	Direct	6,543	12,067	3,192	2,210	2,425	0	187	2,227	9,793	7,038	4,041	222	1,852	281	10,857	128	171	3,482	5,280	1,723	73,719				
	AOL	6,349	11,542	737	3,837	2,236	0	74	536	1,675	1,720	2,259	50	326	115	999	14	98	4,313	4,474	502	41,856				
	Total	12,892	23,609	3,929	6,047	4,661	0	261	2,763	11,468	8,758	6,300	272	2,178	396	11,856	142	269	7,795	9,754	2,225	115,575	62,790		\$8,517,603	
National Variance against 2024/2025 YTD																							-1,265	-2.0%	-\$171,580	-\$171,580
2025-26 Summary YTD Actual vs Total Budget																										
2025-26 Annual Budget																							72,975	100.0%		\$9,899,217
2025-26 YTD Actual																							62,790	86.0%		\$8,517,603
Variance to Budget																							-10,185	-14.0%		-\$1,381,614

Licence Category descriptions

FISH

FWF	Family Season	FWJ	Junior Season
FWA	Adult Season	FWNJ	Non-resident Junior Season
FWNA	Non-resident Adult Season	FDJ	Junior Day
FSLA	Loyal Senior Season	FDNJ	Non-resident Junior Day
FLAA	Local Area Season	FWC	Child Season
FWIA	Adult Winter	FWNC	Non-resident Child Season
FLBA	Adult Long Break	FDNC	Non-resident Child Day
FSBA	Adult Short Break	SRSE	Salmon Endorsement
FDA	Adult Day	DWLR	Designated Waters Licence Resident
	Non-resident Adult Day	DWLN	Designated Waters Licence Non-resident

RMA Fund Update

New Zealand Fish & Game Council Meeting 180 27/28 February 2026

For Decision

Prepared by: Helen Brosnan, Senior Policy Advisor, NZ Fish and Game Council

Kōrero taunaki - Summary of considerations

Purpose

This report provides NZC with an update on RMA projects being funded through the RMA fund. This item will also confirm the additional funding discussed at the NZC workshop on 5 January 2026. There is also an update on NZC advocacy since your last meeting.

Financial Considerations

Nil Budgetary provision Unbudgeted

Risk

Low Medium High Extreme

Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations

That the New Zealand Council:

1. **Approves** \$20,000 additional funding for RM3 as discussed in the NZC workshop held on 20 Jan 2026 as detailed in appendix 1.
2. **Approves** the retention and transfer of funds (\$48k) provided for the Rakaia Water Conservation Order Declarations, to the Manawa Energy re-consenting project involving the Rakaia River (North Canterbury Fish and Game) as detailed in appendix 2.
3. **Notes** that our last appeal point for the Marlborough Environmental Plan mediation has come to an end with final appeal point withdrawn in November 2025. At meeting 157 in May 2022 \$50,000 funding was provided and \$45,990 remains. This funding can now be returned to the RMA fund as summarised in Appendix 3.

4. **Notes** that as of 31 January 2026, the RMA fund has committed funds of \$489,399. Available funds has increased due to returned funds and now \$144,708 is available for new cases. The RMA fund summary table is included in appendix 4a & 4b.

Whakarāpopoto - Executive Summary

5. We discussed \$20,000 additional funding for our RM3 submissions at the NZC workshop. At meeting 171 in December 2024, NZC approved \$98,000 funding for RM3, of which \$70,725 remains. A full summary of the funding application is provided in appendix 1.
6. Following on from the Declarations process, Manawa Energy will be applying for re-consenting or fast track approvals involving their consents on the Rakaia River. North Canterbury Fish and Game would like to retain the remaining funding for the re-consenting project. This is further detailed in appendix 2.
7. MeP appeal mediation has come to an end with final appeal point withdrawn in November 2025. At meeting 157 in May 2022 \$50,000 funding was provided and \$45,990 remains. Earlier funding secured at a number of other meetings has been spent. Nelson / Marlborough can now return the funds to the RMA fund. This issue is covered in appendix 3.
8. Wellington Fish and Game has received the interim decision for Plan Change 2 from Horizons Regional Council. The court has directed a meeting to talk though the planning rule for managing Nitrogen.
9. NZC advocacy work has been focused on Resource Management reform and our submissions to the Natural Environment Bill and the Planning Bill. A workshop was held on 5 February 2026 to discuss our submissions to this process. A staff webinar was held on 29th Jan and a public webinar was held on 11th February. A copy of our final submission will be on the Fish and Game web site (corporate documents tab) after 13th February 2026.
[Microsoft Word - 13022026 FINAL Submission_RM Reform_Fish and Game](#)
10. We continue to work on our submissions for the Fish and Game Bill. We have circulated a “will say” statement to the regions and requested technical evidence to be prepared by regional experts in preparation for the release of the bill.

Kōrerorero – Discussion

11. When the Fish and Game Bill is released we shall also endeavour to provide webinars for staff, members and licence holders.

Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga - Considerations for decision-making

Financial Implications

12. See Appendix 4 for balances for each RMA fund case and the overall fund.

Legislative Implications

13. Our actual submissions to the F&G Bill and RM Reform will detail our submission points on the proposed legislation.

Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities

14. We note that there are likely to be Treaty / Settlement Act issues associated with some of the above legislation changes.

Policy Implications

15. As detailed in specific updates and submissions.

Risks and Mitigations

16. The risk of not being involved in the policy and legislation changes is that habitat protections could be removed to the detriment of the species that we manage.

Consultation

17. Nil

Attachments:

Appendix 1 – RM3 additional funding application form

Appendix 2 – Transfer of funds to consenting process on the Rakaia River North Canterbury Fish and Game.

Appendix 3 - Confirmation of return of funds from Marlborough Fish and Game to RMA fund.

Appendix 4 – Funds allocated and Funds available in the RMA fund.

NZC Mallard Monitoring Policy

New Zealand Fish and Game Council Meeting 180 – 28 & 29 February 2026

Prepared by: Richie Cosgrove COO, NZ Fish and Game Council

Kōrero taunaki - Summary of considerations

Purpose

1. NZC wishes to provide the regions with a Mallard Monitoring Policy. To this end, the Proteus report was commissioned in 2025, and this work went to the regions for comment in December 2025. This item focuses on the feedback received from regions and the response to the regions from their feedback.

Financial considerations

- Nil

 Budgetary provision

 Unbudgeted

Risk

- Low

 Medium

 High

 Extreme

Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations

2. That NZC:
 - a. **Receives** the feedback provided by the regions regarding the 2025 Proteus Report.
 - b. **Receives** the advice provided by Proteus Consulting based on the regions feedback.

Kōrerorero – Discussion

Mallard Monitoring Policy

3. The following update was in the COO report to 5 & 6 December meeting number 178

“I have received an initial draft report from Proteus Consulting's team that has been shared with the NZC and the regions (attached as Appendix 4). We are expecting feedback from the regions on this draft report early next year, so we can collate it for the Proteus team to consider, and they can then provide the final report back to NZC.”

Feedback from the Regions

4. The feedback on the Proteus report from the regions is attached in appendix 1.
5. A response to this feedback from MacKenzie, D.I. of Proteus Consulting is attached in appendix 2.
6. The feedback is summaries below:

Region	Support / Oppose	Key suggestions
NMF&G	Neutral - with suggestions	<p>-Advises including Chukar and Californian Quail</p> <p>-Cautions against standardising gamebird monitoring across NZ and notes that monitoring should be proportional to licence sales.</p>
Wellington (Steve Haslett advice).	Oppose – further engagement requested.	<p>-report does not contain enough detail to provide for development of monitoring policy at a national level.</p> <p>-Specific feedback on each chapter.</p> <p>-Report provides useful overview but much further work required to supplement its material to produce the level of detail required to implement what the report summarises.</p> <p>-Concern that phase 2 as currently specified will not provide sound, detailed, national monitoring and policy without major additional, currently unfunded and uncosted work.</p>
Eastern Fish and Game	Oppose – further engagement requested.	<p>-Concerned about lack of meaningful engagement and consultation from NZC when putting together draft policies and operational plans.</p> <p>-Council supports the findings of the Proteus Report and its recommendations and directs the Manager to write to the NZC expressing disappointment at the lack of engagement with regional staff prior to commissioning work of this nature, particularly give the cost involved, to ensure the work had not already been undertaken.</p>
Ak / Waikato Fish and Game	Oppose -	- Several methodologies promoted in the report, including aerial

		<p>transect surveys, were previously trialled through nationally coordinated programmes when the Game Bird Research Committee was operational. Experience from those programmes indicated that some approaches, including aerial transects, were not suitable across large parts of the North Island due to topography, aviation safety constraints, detectability limitations, and flood driven habitat variability.</p> <p>- It makes little sense for regions with abundant habitat and comparatively low hunter numbers to apply the same monitoring intensity and limited resourcing settings as regions experiencing very high harvest pressure. Uniform monitoring prescriptions do not reflect the biological, environmental, and harvest realities across the country.</p> <p>-The report identifies significant requirements for training, data systems, quality assurance, and capacity building. Council notes that these resourcing implications have not yet been clearly articulated or costed. Before feasibility and prioritisation can be properly assessed, the scale of investment required, ongoing operational costs, and funding pathways must be clearly set out.</p> <p>-Development of national policies, frameworks, Standard Operating Procedures and monitoring techniques much involve expert regions staff from around the country.</p> <p>-Any national approach must recognise scale differences, regional variability, harvest intensity, existing capability, and resourcing implications, and must allow appropriate regional discretion in method selection and implementation</p>
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Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga - Considerations for decision-making

Financial Implications

7. There is currently no further budget required or requested for this work, although comments from regions suggest that more budget will be required for phase 2 of this work.

Legislative Implications

8. This policy may be relevant to the evidence that we provide for the Fish and Game Bill.

Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities

9. There are no Section 4 responsibilities related to this proposal.

Policy Implications

10. Our internal policy and any regions with policy or SOP relating to mallard monitoring will need to be reviewed and updated after this policy is adopted.

Risks and mitigations

11. The risk for Fish and Game is that our monitoring work is not carried out in all regions. It is also thought that each regions could call on expertise from other regions to peer review their monitoring methodology. Ideally, we need to be able to report both nationally and regionally on our species monitoring work.

Consultation

12. The draft policy went to the regions for consultation in December 2025. Their comments were due by 13th February, which is also the closing date for the agenda. Therefore the analysis of their comments will be carried out before the meeting and circulated as a late paper.

Ngā mahinga e whai ake nei - Next actions

13. Depending on the outcome of this decision – next step could be the development of the Mallard Monitoring Policy by a team of experts in the organisation.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Feedback from regions on 2025 Proteus report.

Appendix 2 – Response from Proteus Consulting on the feedback from the regions (To Come as feedback only received by some regions in the week 16 Feb).

Appendix 3 – Proteus Report as attached to the COO report in December 2025

Appendix 4 - Comments from Steve Haslett



16 February 2026

Barrie Barnes
 New Zealand Fish and Game Council
 By email: nzcouncil@fishandgame.org.nz
 Cc: rcosgrove@fishandgame.org.nz

Dear Barrie

Re: Auckland Waikato Fish and Game Council Feedback on National Statistical Monitoring Framework.

This letter follows preliminary consideration of the Statistical Considerations for Game Bird Monitoring at a National Scale report and associated technical material. Council has now formally considered the report at its meeting held on 14 February and provides the following response.

Auckland Waikato Fish and Game Council acknowledges that the Proteus report is technically robust and provides a comprehensive overview of contemporary statistical approaches to game bird monitoring.

Council notes, however, that several methodologies promoted in the report, including aerial transect surveys, were previously trialled through nationally coordinated programmes when the Game Bird Research Committee was operational. Experience from those programmes indicated that some approaches, including aerial transects, were not suitable across large parts of the North Island due to topography, aviation safety constraints, detectability limitations, and flood driven habitat variability.

It is also important to recognise that aerial transects, and banding provide fundamentally different suites of information. Aerial surveys provide population indices or density estimates at a point in time. Banding, by contrast, provides demographic information including survival rates, recruitment, and harvest rate estimates, and therefore gives greater insight into regulatory effects and environmental drivers governing population change.

In Auckland Waikato we have lent toward using banding data because it provides information that cannot be obtained from aerial transects alone. This region receives by far the most hunting pressure in the country. Based on recent harvest survey analysis, our region receives approximately 28 times the level of hunter effort experienced on the West Coast of the South Island. Banding analysis shows that at some sites up to 40 percent of the total stock may be harvested in a single season. In that context, regions such as ours have the potential for top-down harvest pressure to materially influence population dynamics.

Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, gamebirds and their habitats.

Auckland/Waikato Region

156 Brymer Rd, RD 9, Hamilton 3289, New Zealand. Telephone (07) 849 1666
 Email: aucklandwaikato@fishandgame.org.nz www.fishandgame.org.nz

It is therefore critical to consider the operational needs and risk profiles of each region. It makes little sense for regions with abundant habitat and comparatively low hunter numbers to apply the same monitoring intensity and limited resourcing settings as regions experiencing very high harvest pressure. Uniform monitoring prescriptions do not reflect the biological, environmental, and harvest realities across the country.

In response to earlier national trials, several regions including Auckland Waikato transitioned to banding as a primary monitoring tool. Banding has provided a practical and scalable method suited to our landscape, management risks, and hunter pressure.

Council reinforces the importance of any national framework adopting a hybrid model that allows regional councils discretion to apply monitoring methods that are fit for purpose within their landscapes, operational constraints, and management objectives.

National consistency in monitoring is only appropriate where regions have comparable monitoring needs and management risk profiles. Council considers it neither efficient nor statistically justified to apply uniform monitoring intensity, resourcing, and effort across regions with fundamentally different hunter numbers, harvest pressure, and population dynamics.

Council also notes that any national framework must recognise existing regional datasets and capability and avoid unnecessary duplication or displacement of effective long running monitoring programmes.

The report identifies significant requirements for training, data systems, quality assurance, and capacity building. Council notes that these resourcing implications have not yet been clearly articulated or costed. Before feasibility and prioritisation can be properly assessed, the scale of investment required, ongoing operational costs, and funding pathways must be clearly set out.

It is also Council's view that any draft national policies, frameworks, standard operating procedures, or further development of monitoring techniques must involve expert regional staff from across the country at an early stage. Regional staff are responsible for implementation on the ground and hold the technical, statistical, and operational knowledge necessary to test feasibility, identify unintended consequences, and ensure proposed approaches are workable across diverse regional contexts.

Early and meaningful engagement with regional subject matter experts would materially improve the quality of any national monitoring framework, reduce the risk of impractical or inefficient requirements, and support more effective and informed governance decision making.

Council requests that this workstream is best progressed and workshopped at an operational staff level prior to governance consideration, to ensure that any proposed framework is technically sound, feasible, and grounded in practical experience.

In summary, while Council recognises the technical merit of the statistical report, it does not support the development of a rigid nationally prescribed monitoring framework. Any national approach must recognise scale differences, regional variability, harvest intensity, existing capability, and resourcing implications, and must allow appropriate regional discretion in method selection and implementation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Juby', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nigel Juby
Chair
Auckland Waikato Fish and Game Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Klee', with a simple, clean style.

David Klee
Chief Executive
Auckland Waikato Fish & Game Council



16 February 2026

Barrie Barnes
Chairperson
New Zealand Fish and Game Council

By email

Requested Feedback

Dear Barrie

Following Eastern Fish and Game Council's meeting on Thursday 12 February 2026, please find below our Councils feedback on the requested papers and in general.

Eastern Fish and Game Council is concerned and disappointed with the lack of meaningful engagement and consultation from NZC when putting together draft policies and operational plans.

NZC seems to be working in a silo environment and not connecting with the regions to facilitate a constructive working plan to gather feedback and input when creating operational plans and policies. The 3 papers below are an example of a lack of using our own specialist staff at the outset to get a clear picture of what has been done previously, what is practical and an appreciation of variance based on regions unique environments and resources.

We ask that NZC takes more time to discuss, engage and structure operational plans and policy foundations that have operational impacts with the regions and any specialist staff at the outset, this will save time, money and help to build an organisation that works together and fulfills NZC's coordination role.

Draft NZ Crop Depredation

12.3 *Agreed (Kevin Coutts/Murray Ferris) that Council requests that NZC engage and receive input from specialist staff around the Country to create a practical and workable policy and operational guidelines that meet the legislative requirement and is able to be used and implemented nationally. [26/02/12.3]*

Statistical Consideration for Game Bird Monitoring at a National Level – Proteus Report

13.3 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Murray Ferris) that Council supports the findings of the Proteus Report and its recommendations and directs the Manager to write to the NZC Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, game birds and their habitats*

Eastern Region



expressing disappointment at the lack of engagement with regional staff prior to commissioning work of this nature, particularly given the cost involved, to ensure the work had not already been undertaken. Cr Mark Sceats abstained [26/02/13.3]

R3 Regional Implementation

14.9 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Murray Ferris) that Council supports the principle and acknowledges that operationally Eastern is already involved and participates. That NZC develops a more robust marketing and R3 plan that is both measurable and practical in consultation with the regions and specialist staff to help increase sales and revenue and requested that updates be provided on the measured results. [25/02/14.9]*

Thanking you for your efforts and hope that NZC takes time to reflect on its current management engagement and work streams to a more collaborative and cohesive approach that in time will help to build a *'unified and enduring organisation'*.

Yours sincerely

Arash Alaeinia
Chief Executive Officer
Eastern Fish and Game Region

Cc. Lindsay Lyons, Chair, Eastern Fish and Game Council

Comments on
“Statistical considerations for game bird monitoring at a national scale”
Stefan Meyer, Heloise Pavanato and Darryl MacKenzie
 - **Report for New Zealand Fish & Game Council**
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1. General comment on the 2025 Proteus report

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However, in line with its objectives and budget for its preparation (\$25,550 - \$34,500), the report is not and does not purport to be a monitoring manual. So while it provides a useful conceptual summary, the report does not contain sufficient information to be more than a general overview of some technical aspects of what national monitoring at Fish and Game could be. The report also does not contain enough detail to act as a full template for future development of Fish and Game’s monitoring or monitoring policy at a national level. Because these are structural and content considerations, the report will necessarily have limited utility to Fish and Game for development of a national monitoring scheme without major supplementation of and additions to the material it contains.

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Deliverable: ongoing support to NZFGC staff and advisors on monitoring-related issues, during NZFGC's development of the National Gamebird Monitoring Policy document and associated SOPs.

The budget for phase 2 is \$7500 to \$12,500 which would seem to limit Phase 2 support to piecemeal advice based around current regional monitoring methods.

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However, there is a pool of monitoring expertise and experience within Fish and Game regions which could be better utilised by having Phase 2 re-focused on a set of inter-regional workshops for interested Fish and Game staff and which might also include any available external experts. The aim of the workshops would be to gain better understanding of regional similarities and differences and start to develop a cost-effective, “bottom up” approach to improved monitoring at Fish and Game through maximising the benefit of existing resources.

Professor Emeritus Stephen Haslett

*Professor of Statistics
School of Mathematical and Computational Sciences
Massey University
Palmerston North & Wellington
Aotearoa/New Zealand*

*Visiting Research Fellow
Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies and Statistics
& Former Professor/Director
Statistical Consulting Unit
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 2601 Australia*

*Former NIASRA Professorial Fellow
Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences
University of Wollongong
NSW 2522, Australia*

30 October 2025



9th February 2026

By email: rcosgrove@fishandgame.org.nz

Richard Cosgrove

Chief Operating Officer

New Zealand Fish & Game Council

Dear Richard:

Request for regional feedback:

Draft crop depredation policy: due to the short consultation timeframe, the response deadline occurred before our next in-person council meeting. As a result, staff reviewed the matters requiring regional council feedback and prepared a draft response, which was then circulated to regional Governors for input and incorporated into this final submission. Ideally, if regional operational staff had been involved earlier in developing the draft crop depredation policy, the document would be more fit for purpose and would have required less time from both staff and Governors.

The draft crop depredation policy contains excessive detail on methodology and reads more like a standard operating procedure than a high-level policy document. We recommend that NZC develop a concise national policy, no longer than two pages, that acknowledges regional differences and requires each region to develop or review its own crop depredation policy based on core principles outlined in the final NZC policy. NZC staff could then review regional policies for compliance. Our current regional crop depredation policy is **attached** for your consideration.

NZC should recognise that regional differences require varied approaches to crop depredation, influenced by species, geography, and resources. The effectiveness of these approaches is best measured by the number of complaints received, rather than applying a uniform policy nationwide. The Nelson - Marlborough region has received no complaints from landowners or hunters regarding our administration of approximately 50 crop depredation permits per year, mainly for pukeko and paradise shelduck, over the past two decades. We believe the proposed national approach will likely generate complaints from regional landowners and require significant additional unbudgeted staff time, contrary to the goal of improving efficiency.

Decision-making on crop depredation issues should remain with regional staff, provided they adhere to agreed principles in the final NZC policy. These principles could include objectives such as *maintaining positive landowner relationships while supporting licence holders*. Regional staff are best placed to assess

local gamebird populations, the impact on livelihoods, and the most effective responses. In our view, the current NZC approach is addressing a problem that does not exist in this region and is creating unnecessary demands on staff time, with future budget implications.

Nelson-Marlborough staff believe that enforcing the current draft NZC crop depredation policy will erode landowner goodwill and may lead to the use of illegal methods to control parry damage to crops.


Proteus gamebird monitoring report: staff have reviewed the detailed report and note that Table 2 should be updated to include Chukar and Californian quail, which can be hunted in this region. While the report and its principles are helpful, we caution against standardising gamebird monitoring across New Zealand. Differences in geography, species, harvest levels, and resources mean that monitoring efforts and approaches will necessarily vary between regions. For example, Auckland/Waikato sells 8,000–10,000 gamebird licences annually, compared to 800–1,000 in Nelson Marlborough.

Given the low harvest and the fact that gamebirds account for only about 20% of this region's total licence income, the Nelson Marlborough annual workplan appropriately prioritises sports fisheries management. Despite this, regional gamebird hunters still receive approximately twice the level of work compared to what game licence sales fund, due to ongoing requirements for core species management work, compliance, hunter access advocacy, and wetland work.

The user pays/user says principle, which underpins Fish & Game, is at risk of being undermined by nationalising and standardising regional workplan priorities. This could lead to significant dissatisfaction among regional licence holders. For example, this region conducts static coastal index counts at 60 sites to estimate mallard populations. It is questionable whether seeking additional resources for aerial transect counts or banding would be acceptable to fishing licence holders, who contribute nearly 80% of our total licence income, especially if it means reducing fisheries monitoring activities. In contrast, it is appropriate for Auckland/Waikato to invest heavily in gamebird monitoring due to their higher licence sales and harvest. As long as regions can demonstrate sustainable game species harvest, differences in methodology and resourcing should be acceptable. We urge the New Zealand Council to uphold this principle as some functions are centralised and directed by national policy, to maintain long-term regional licence holder satisfaction.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Yours Sincerely



Owen Baigent, Nelson Marlborough Fish & Game Council Chairman

CC Bill Oleary NZC rep

Comments on
“Statistical considerations for game bird monitoring at a national scale”
Stefan Meyer, Heloise Pavanato and Darryl MacKenzie
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Professor Emeritus Stephen Haslett

*Professor of Statistics
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Massey University
Palmerston North & Wellington
Aotearoa/New Zealand*

*Visiting Research Fellow
Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies and Statistics
& Former Professor/Director
Statistical Consulting Unit
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 2601 Australia*

*Former NIASRA Professorial Fellow
Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences
University of Wollongong
NSW 2522, Australia*

30 October 2025

NZC Correspondence Register

Date	In/Out	Received From	Addressed To	Summary	Date Filed
14/01/2026	In	Rainsford Grubb	NZC Chair	FW: Financial review of Fish and Game	26/01/2026
10/02/2026	In	Amelia Kendall	CEO	Human Rights Commission: Notification of a complaint under Part 1A Human Rights Act 1993 (HR 243725)	12/02/2026
16/02/2026	In	Bryce Johnson	NZC Chair and CEO	RE: A fishing competition without any fish!?	18/02/2026
17/02/2026	In	EASTERN CE	NZC Chair	W: Eastern Fish and Game Council Feedback on Crop Depredation, Proteus Report & R3	18/02/2026

Hon Judith Collins KC

Attorney General
 Minister of Defence
 Minister for Digitising Government
 Minister for the Public Service
 Minister Responsible for the GCSB
 Minister Responsible for the NZSIS
 Minister for Space



Rhys Barrier
 Manager
 Fish and Game Nelson/Marlborough
 66-74 Champion Road
 Richmond,
 Nelson 7020

By email: rbarrier@fishandgame.org.nz; nelsonmarlborough@fishandgame.org.nz

Dear Mr Barrier,

STAFFORD V ATTORNEY-GENERAL: IMPLICATIONS FOR ACCLIMATISATION RESERVE, CHAMPION ROAD, RICHMOND

I have today signed an agreement that resolves long-standing litigation regarding the underlying ownership of land held by the Crown within areas of Nelson and Tasman. This affects ownership of the Acclimatisation Reserve, Champion Road .

In 2010, private law proceedings were filed against the Crown in the High Court relating to the 'Nelson Tenths' scheme and the Crown's failure to reserve a specific quantity of land for the original owners of land sold to the New Zealand Company in the 1840s.

In October 2024, the High Court in Attorney-General v Stafford [2024] NZHC 3110 found that all land held by the Crown within specific areas of Nelson and Tasman is impressed with a constructive trust in favour of a class of beneficiaries referred to as 'the descendants of the customary owners'. The trust found includes all Department of Conservation land held by the Crown in the relevant areas. This includes Acclimatisation Reserve, Champion Road.

My Cabinet colleagues and I decided that there was a strong public interest in settling this case. Therefore, the Crown and the Plaintiff's representatives commenced confidential negotiations to resolve the litigation in August 2025. Today, 17 December 2025, I signed a Resolution Agreement with the Plaintiff to resolve this case. I attach the Press Release, for your information, on that package.

Due to the number of affected sites and the necessary confidentiality of negotiations, there are a number of conservation sites where the future of the site has not yet been discussed in a meaningful way. Acclimatisation Reserve, Champion Road is one such site. I understand

that Fish and Game Nelson has a Control and Manage Agreement with the Department of Conservation over this site.

The Resolution Agreement records that ownership of Acclimatisation Reserve, Champion Road has been restored to the original owners who are represented by the Te Here-ā-Nuku Trust. This includes both the underlying land and its improvements. The Department of Conservation will no longer own Acclimatisation Reserve, Champion Road. The Control and Manage Agreement will cease once title is raised for the Trust through forthcoming legislation to give effect to the Resolution Agreement.

I understand that this news will come as a surprise to you. To that end, I have asked my officials to meet with you in the new year, alongside representatives from Te Here-ā-Nuku Trust, to discuss this significant site and what its future may look like. As part of that process, you will need to provide information about the site (significant works, financial information, other matters) to Te Here-ā-Nuku Trust.

I encourage you to engage with my officials and Te Here-ā-Nuku Trust representatives with an open mind. The Trust has strong roots in the community and the Trustees acknowledge the significant work you have done with Fairfield House. I am confident a mutually satisfactory arrangement can be reached.

Yours sincerely



Hon Judith Collins KC
Attorney-General

Ref: 243725

Received: Thursday, 25 September 2025 7:01 pm

Complaint Form

Complainant name

Richard Milczarski

Who are you complaining about?

Fish and Game New Zealand

What type of complaint do you want to make?

Discrimination

What ground of discrimination is your complaint about?

Family status

Where did your experience happen?

Goods or services

What happened?

Due to Fish and Games new Freshwater licensing criteria we are unable to purchase a family license which we have been purchasing for multiple years so my partner and I can fish together.

You now have to have a child or grandchild under 17 years of age to become eligible for a family license.

We are a childless couple in our sixtys so for my partner it will be another \$156 so a total of \$289 for both when a family license now is \$203.

We are being discriminated against due to not having children.

As we are on limited income this means we can only afford 1 seniors license at \$133.

When did this happen?

25/09/25 25/09/25

Have you tried sorting out your complaint another way?

Yes

I have also emailed Fish and Game and awaiting a response.

What outcomes are you seeking?

A change of the criteria so couples can be deemed as a family unit and charged accordingly \$203

Samantha May

From: Barrie Barnes
Sent: Monday, 16 February 2026 4:51 pm
To: Bryce Johnson
Cc: Corina Jordan; Samantha May
Subject: RE: A fishing competition without any fish!?

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello Bryce,
 Thank you for forwarding the below onto me. I will pass on to F&G NZC and add to inwards correspondence.

Ngā mihi
 Barrie

Barrie Barnes | Chair
New Zealand Fish and Game Council
Mobile 021 925 006
 E BBarnes@fishandgame.org.nz W www.fishandgame.org.nz

From: Bryce Johnson <brycejohnsonnz@outlook.com>
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2026 3:33 PM
To: Barrie Barnes <BBarnes@fishandgame.org.nz>
Cc: Corina Jordan <cjordan@fishandgame.org.nz>
Subject: FW: A fishing competition without any fish!?

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Barrie,
 FYI.
 Bryce

From: Will Appelbe, Greenpeace <crew@act.greenpeace.org.nz>
Sent: Monday, 16 February 2026 2:11 pm
To: brycejohnsonnz@outlook.com
Subject: A fishing competition without any fish!?



Kia ora Bryce,

When I heard the news last week that the Rakaia salmon anglers' competition would no longer involve any fishing because **there aren't enough fish in the river**, I knew we had to take action.

That's why over the weekend, **Greenpeace activists headed down to Rakaia to take action and point the finger at the people responsible** for the collapse of the river. We turned the township's iconic statue into a cartoon-style dead fish, blaming Fonterra for the death of the Rakaia salmon.



Dairy expansion is leading to more fish death, more unswimmable rivers, and more undrinkable water in rural communities. We're calling for an **end to dairy expansion in Aotearoa. [Sign the petition now.](#)**

Take action to protect the Rakaia salmon!

Rakaia's salmon fishing competition is on life support. It's still going ahead, but fishing has been replaced by a raffle to continue to raise conservation funds for the river.

A fishing competition without any fish - and **it's all because of Fonterra and the intensive dairy industry.**

Put simply, there are so many cows in New Zealand that we can't naturally grow enough grass to feed them. So the **dairy industry uses irrigation to cheat** the process and grow more grass - but in doing so, they take massive amounts of water from the rivers.

Why are there so many cows? Because **it's all about the money.** Fonterra's oversized dairy herd has been draining rivers like the Rakaia dry for the sake of their fat bottom line. **And now, the famous Rakaia salmon are dying out** because of it, making the town's yearly fishing competition a thing of the past.

Canterbury's braided rivers are in a state of ecological collapse, rural communities can't drink the water coming out of their kitchen taps, and many lakes are unswimmable. **Despite the crisis, the dairy herd is expanding rapidly.**

This cannot continue.

[We're calling for an end to dairy expansion, to protect New Zealand's lakes and rivers for generations to come. Will you join us?](#)

YES, add my name now!

Ngā mihi,

Will, on behalf of the whole Greenpeace crew

P.S. Your support helps us to take action like this when the lakes and rivers we love are under threat. **Please consider donating today to support our work to protect fresh water.**

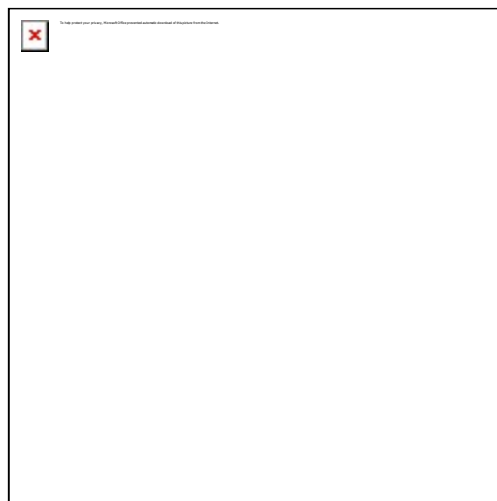
Thank you for supporting our vital work. Greenpeace does not accept funding from governments or corporations.

Everything we do is thanks to the generous support of people like you!

Will you become a regular donor today to help protect the planet every single day?

\$15 \$20

\$25 \$30



GREENPEACE AOTEAROA

www.greenpeace.org.nz

11 Akiraho Street, Mount Eden, Auckland, New Zealand

crew@act.greenpeace.org.nz is not a reply address.

To get in touch with us, please use the 'Reply' button in your email client, or contact us at:

0800 22 33 44 | info@greenpeace.org.nz

This email was intended for:

Bryce Johnson
brycejohnsonz@outlook.com

[Unsubscribe me from this list](#)



16 February 2026

Barrie Barnes
Chairperson
New Zealand Fish and Game Council

By email

Requested Feedback

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Chief Executive Officer
Eastern Fish and Game Region

Cc. Lindsay Lyons, Chair, Eastern Fish and Game Council