

## AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held at the  
NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton,  
on Saturday 11 February 2017 commencing at 11.30 a.m.

### AGENDA

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**M. Young**  
**Chairman**

27/01/17

**AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME**

**Minutes of a Meeting of Council**  
**held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton,**  
**on Saturday 3 December 2016 commencing at 11.00am.**

**PRESENT:**

**Chairman:** M. Young

**Councillors:** G. Annan, D. Cocks, W. Howard, N. Juby, A. Kerr, P. Shaw, C. Sherrard,  
S. Smith, E. Williamson.

**Staff:** B. Wilson, J. Dyer, D. Klee, M. Davis.

**Visitors:** P. Hardy (DoC), L. Barea, T. Mills, J. Atkinson, I. Bailey.

**1. APOLOGIES**

A. Daniel, A. Sintenie, B. Smith, C. Carey.

It was moved;

*that the apologies be accepted.*

*Annan/Cocks CARRIED*

**2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:**

None declared.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 15 OCTOBER 2016:**

It was moved;

*that the minutes of the previous meeting of 15 October 2016 be accepted as a true and correct record.*

*Annan/S. Smith CARRIED*

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

Mr Wilson provided an update on the Healthy Rivers project, noting that funding would soon be sought from the national legal fund for expert witnesses.

**8. GAMEBIRD REGULATIONS:**

The Chairman welcomed visitors to the meeting and invited them to address Councillors on their remits to the gamebird regulations.

Mr Lawrence Barea spoke on behalf of the NZ Falconers Association, who were requesting that Australasian harriers trained for falconry should be a permitted method for the taking of game during the gamebird season. They were seeking no other changes to the game season or bag limits. Mr Barea envisaged that no more than 8-10 falconers

would be in the Auckland/Waikato Region over the next five years as the sport developed, and thus harvest rates for falconers would be very low.

Councillors agreed that it was not a management issue due to the small number of falconers present in the region and that they still had to comply with the regulations regarding bag limits.

It was moved;

**that the remit from the NZ Falconers Association to allow for Australasian harriers trained for falconry to be a permitted method for the taking of game during the gamebird season be approved.**

**Annan/S. Smith CARRIED**

It was moved;

**that Mr Barea is asked to provide a harvest report at the end of the season.**

**Kerr/Annan CARRIED**

Mr Tom Mills spoke on behalf of the remit from Lake Rotokauri standholders requesting decoy restrictions at Lake Rotokauri. Support for decoy restriction was virtually unanimous amongst Lake Rotokauri standholders with 10 out of a total 11 standholders agreeing with a total decoy limit of 50 decoys and no more than 2 mechanised decoys.

After discussion it was moved;

**that there be a total decoy limit of 50 decoys per stand on Lake Rotokauri and no decoys to be placed within 50 metres of those placed by another hunter.**

**Cocks/Annan CARRIED**

**that the use of battery powered decoys on Lake Rotokauri be limited to no more than 2 per stand.**

**Shaw/S. Smith CARRIED**

Mr Ian Bailey introduced his remit concerning changes to the current regulations that he believed would reduce the hunter harvest of mallards in order to have more pairs survive to nest and to allow the population to rebuild.

Mr Klee responded that the bag limit would have to be heavily reduced to have any significant impact on harvest. Based on the 2016 harvest statistics a 8 or 6 bird limit would only realise a 4% and 12% reduction respectively.

Councillor Shaw expressed his preference for a six week season due to his concerns that a four week season provided licence holders with limited hunting opportunities.

Chairman Young emphasised that hunting on the Kaipara Harbour was dependant on the tides and thus a four week season provided limited opportunities. Nevertheless he supported a four week season due to the current low mallard population.

It was moved;

**that the current zero limit on brown quail be removed and a combined 10 bird limit with California quail be instated. All other regulations, excluding the regulations amended at this Council meeting, to remain unchanged.**

**Cocks/Williamson CARRIED**

Messrs Mills, Barea and Bailey left the meeting at 11.50am.

## **5 CORRESPONDENCE:**

A letter was tabled from Mr Lindsay Lyons, Chairman of NZF&GC, in reply to the Chairman's letter of 27 June 2016 about the supply of plastic game bird licences.

It was noted that the issue of plastic game bird licences and tags would be discussed in agenda item 11.

It was moved;

**that the correspondence be received.**

**Annan/Cocks CARRIED**

## **6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:**

Council discussed the proposed aerial drop of 1080 on the Whangamarino Wetland by TBNZ. Mr Wilson informed that he had emailed all standholders on F&G land in the Whangamarino warning them of the potential consequences of the 1080 drop.

Mr Paul Hardy was asked for an update and he replied that consideration was being given to delaying the aerial drop until after the 2017 duck season.

Mr Wilson reminded Councillors that there was a standing invitation for the coordinator of the aerial 1080 drop to attend a Council meeting.

Councillors expressed their concerns over the use of 1080 laced carrots and the potential for their consumption by mallards. Concern was also expressed at the potential for 1080 laced carrots to fall into natural waters.

The meeting rose for lunch at 12.15pm and resumed at 1pm.

Mr Klee provided an update on the Lake Waikare/Whangamarino Flood Scheme consent review. Discussion ensued on flocking the water as part of a treatment regime.

It was moved;

**that the CE Bimonthly report and Financial Statements be accepted.**

**Cocks/Annan CARRIED**

**7. 2017 MEETING SCHEDULE:**

It was moved;

**that the 2017 Meeting Schedule be approved.**

**Annan/S. Smith CARRIED**

**9. OSH REPORT:**

It was moved;

**that the OSH Report for December 2016 be approved.**

**Cocks/S. Smith CARRIED**

**10. COUNCILLOR FIELD TRIP:**

Councillors agreed with Councillor Cocks' recommendation that the Field Trip should include the subdivision development adjacent to the Cathcart Wetland.

**11. HUNTING STAND CLAIM TAG:**

Mr Robert Sowman, Policy & Planning Manager NZF&GC, memo on hunting claim tags was tabled.

After discussion on Mr Sowman's memo and recommendations it was moved;

**that licence holders should be reminded via publicity efforts that they need to write their licence number and name on their claim boards as well as posting their tag.**

**Cocks/S. Smith CARRIED**

It was moved;

**that the following recommendations were supported:**

- a) No one (outside of A/W F&G Region) under the age of 16 is entitled to claim a hunting stand. In the A/W Region no one under the age of 18 can claim a hunting stand.
- b) The wording of Wildlife Regulation 9b. be added to the information on the tag – *no person shall claim more than one stand*

**that the following recommendations are opposed:**

- c) As an interim step, hunters when completing online licence applications can opt out of receiving plastic licences and plastic stand claim tags, accepting just the receipt or digital licence version.
- d) Longer term (in two-three seasons time) make provision for just one tag per licence – the digital tag

- e) A digital hunting claim tag to be made available for printing with hunters encouraged to 'mark-up' a stand utilising the printed tag.

**that the following recommendation is supported with an amendment:**

- f) Make writing the name of the claimant and the number of their licence, as was once the practice, an acceptable peg claim method, **'along with the posting of a claim tag'**.

**Williamson/Annan CARRIED**

## **12. NZF&GC MEETING 23 SEPTEMBER 2016:**

Councillor Sherrard summarised the main points arising from the September and December 2016 meetings of the NZF&GC.

Councillor Cocks expressed his concern that while licence sales were increasing, actual revenue had declined due to the introduction of the new licence categories

Councillor Sherrard confirmed that the magazine '*Fish & Game*' had been purchased by the NZF&GC. At present the magazine would continue to be produced as before but that the NZF&GC would be consulting with the regions as to the long-term status of the magazine.

Councillor Cocks asked whether it was one of F&G's core activities to run the magazine, and he emphasised that F&G should not be subsidising the magazine's production.

Councillor Sherrard informed the meeting of the proposed itinerary for the introduction of a ban on lead shot for sub-gauge shotguns as requested by the Minister of Conservation. The ban on lead shot to be phased in over four years with .410 gauge excluded.

## **13. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

There was brief discussion on the safety aspects of using non-toxic shot.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 1.54pm.

**Bi Monthly Managers Report****Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Meeting February 2017**

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**OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT****Project 1111 Drift diving**

Adam Daniel has updated the SOP for drift dive surveys and planned the 2017 drift dive program.

**Project 1112 Banding**

**Banding:** To date, all banding sites have produced excellent catches. So far we have captured over 3000 ducks across 3 sites and this exceeds the numbers caught at all our sites in recent years. Whilst banding catch rates should not be used as a surrogate for population, as many variables control the numbers caught, it is pleasing to see so many birds around. Once again, a massive thanks to all of our volunteers who come out and make it possible for us to catch and process those numbers of birds. Without their help the banding project could not succeed.

**Project 1115 Population Surveys**

Adam has been delighted with recent trout returns from Arapuni and there are signs that the wild fish population is increasing. Adam responded to the Oraka River crayfish kill and this investigation is ongoing.

**Project 1117 Gamebird Research**

**PhD Project Mallard Productivity:** Jenn Sheppard is currently busy working on data analysis and also collecting further blood samples during banding for a collaborative project she is working on looking at hybridization. Our first manuscript, "Effects of surgically implanted transmitters on reproduction and survival in mallards" has been conditionally accepted by the *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, pending revisions. Our second manuscript, "Factors influencing nest survival and breeding ecology of female mallards in New Zealand" is nearly ready for submission to Auckland University but requires additional modifications which Jenn is currently working through. We hope to submit this around the 1st week of February. Our third and 4th manuscripts on duckling and female survival, respectively, are in their early phases of development. Due to comments received on Erin Garrick's manuscript submission, we've had to shift our intended analysis and will have to use a complicated Bayesian framework to properly assess duckling and female survival. Due to the complicated nature of the statistics that we have to use going forward, Jenn's supervisor Courtney Amundsen is considering another visit to New Zealand in the upcoming months. While here, she'll be able to assist with code writing. Matt McDougall is already familiar with the use of the WinBUGS program, and has agreed to also assist with these chapters.

**Masters Project Heavy Metal Concentrations:** Katie Gibb has been busy conducting further necropsy's and prepping the close to 800 samples ready for analysis. At the moment we have only conducted a small number of subsamples, but event these have given us some interesting results. For pre-breeding blood samples, 15% had Lead levels which were considered above background levels, and 10% were above what was considered toxic. Organs allow a more

historical view, three elements were found to be elevated; Copper, Cadmium and Lead. We found 5% of birds with toxic Lead levels, Cadmium levels showed 10% of samples with levels considered abnormal. However, the most unexpected and interesting result was the Copper, with 35% elevated above normal range. Birds that carry an increased pollutant level are known to have an increased chance of infection and are at higher risk of predation. From working closely with the data from the tracking study we will be able see if heavy metals are passed on from the female to the egg, and how this might affect reproductive success, such as; number of eggs produced, amount of fertile eggs per clutch and the survival rate of chicks.

### Project 1121 Harvest Survey

Adam finished removing the final camera for the angler use project in the upper Whanganui catchment and has begun preparing the report.

## **OUTPUT 2 HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT**

### Project 1211 R.M.A.

**Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan:** Mischa Davis has been drafting a report on the Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan and how the Plan affects Fish & Game. Of importance is how the Plan can be useful when Fish & Game are taking part in Resource Management Act processes in the contributing catchments of the Hauraki Gulf. While the Plan's purpose is to restore the marine environment of the Hauraki Gulf, the Plan provides direction on how to achieve this through land use management in the catchments that drain into the gulf. Fish & Game own land within the focused catchment area of Waihou/Pikoi, including wetland areas used for hunting waterfowl. Sediment build up in wetlands and waterways as well as poor water quality can negatively impact the health and biology of these ecosystems. So the Plan can be useful for Fish & Game as it sets actions around improving water quality in the catchments that drain into the Hauraki Gulf. For example the Plan sets an action of ensuring no nutrient increases in the interim until sufficient information is available to set nutrient load limits. Another action is to create at least 15 significant new wetlands systems by 2026 and another of encouraging and incentivising the establishment of wetlands and sediment traps on private land.

**Professional development:** Mischa Davis and Anna Sintenie attended the NZLS Environmental Law Intensive in Auckland in November. This was topical and informative with subjects covered including the upcoming amendments to the RMA, which will affect Fish and Game's engagement on plan changes and resource consents; an RMA case law update; practical considerations for assessing effects under the RMA; and the new developments in collaborative planning under the RMA.

**Healthy Rivers plan change for the Waikato/Waipā catchment (PC 1):** PC 1 has been partially withdrawn from notification for further consultation with Hauraki Iwi. This is a disappointment as Whangamarino and Waikare have been pulled out of scope; provisions effective upon notification will no longer be in effect in these areas. The WRC have said that the annexed area will be put back into the broader plan change when consultation is concluded. A Judicial Review has been filed by industry sectors seeking the remedy that the entire PC 1 be withdrawn from notification as a whole until consultation with iwi is finalised, so the process continues to be a moving feast. PC 1 submissions are still due on 8 March 2017. Peter Wilson (Environmental Manager – Wellington Fish and Game) and Anna are continuing to work on submissions, which will require significant attention until early March.



Fish and Game's overall strategy has been to seek improvements which ensure that the objectives of the proposed plan are capable of being achieved by its rules and policies. However, further work has shown that some of the long-term targets for subcatchments will not be sufficient to achieve ecosystem health. We will therefore be advocating for long-term targets that are capable of meeting the standard of ecosystem health in addition to practical improvements to the rule framework. In terms of improvements to the rule framework, we continue to be in conference with other stakeholders, particularly the Beef and Lamb NZ and Farmers for Positive Change and hope that proposed changes will receive broad-based support. There is broad opposition to grandparenting of Nitrogen, and we are supporting Beef and Lamb NZ in advocating a Land Use Capability - based approach to Nitrogen. The other element of PC 1 which has faced strong opposition from farmers is blanket fencing rules for stock exclusion. We are advocating alternatives to blanket fencing rules by giving land users the opportunity to implement riparian buffers depending on their slope class, or avoid sediment discharge by other means agreed in the consenting process. We expect this is a solution which will find some support from the drystock sector. Further support from environmental NGOs and DOC has not yet been forthcoming.

**Inghams application:** Further meetings with the applicant have been postponed due to their consultants being unavailable.

**Pukekohe WWTP:** We submitted in opposition to the proposed discharge consent. We have a number of concerns with the proposal.

The application fails to adequately assess the adverse effects on the environment, including cumulative effects. Projected increases in Nitrogen above current levels are of particular concern. A fundamental issue with the application is the position it adopts regarding the existing environment. The approach is invalid and is contrary to the decision in *Ngati Rangī Trust v Manawatu-Whanganui Regional Council* [2016] NZHC 2948, where the High Court clarified that finite consent renewals are not permanent and do not carry existing use right protections, thus existing use rights from such permits should not be construed as part of the environment.

The application goes on to use existing consent conditions and not actual contaminant loading as the baseline to measure improvements from, which leads to the incorrect conclusion that this application will provide water quality enhancement. The proposed increase in the discharge of Nitrogen in particular is in direct conflict to achieving the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River and will further degrade the natural character of the River. Under the proposed conditions if the consent holder were to discharge to the limits the total annual mass load of both N and P would increase substantially over both current load and limits imposed in previous conditions. It is difficult to reconcile these outcomes with either maintenance or improvement as the application claims.

The adjacent Fish and Game owned Piggott Wetland has high recreational and ecological values. The wetland contains a significant kahikatea stand and is home to a number of threatened flora and fauna. We are concerned that the increased discharge volumes will lead to further flooding and therefore increased discharge of contaminants into the wetland. Increased nutrients can lead to nuisance plant growth and a general enrichment of a system which is usually low in nutrients, particularly phosphorous.

The proposed mitigation works which involves relatively small amounts of planting appear to be somewhat ad-hoc and will do little to offset the adverse effects on the environment. The

proposed conditions relating to the Riparian Planting and Management Plan do not set targets or aims that are required to be achieved. A condition relating to the development of a plan, without setting targets that the plan must achieve is considered poor planning practice. We also note that consent 940332 already had a condition (h) to undertake riparian planting on stream banks adjacent to their property and it needs to be clarified whether any of the proposed planting relating to the current consent falls within the zone covered by existing conditions of consent.

### **Project 1221 Council Land**

**Williamson Wetland:** Ongoing liaison with pond holders to ensure the implementation of the predator control programme. Some have failed to reply to correspondence and will need to be chased up to ensure everyone is pulling their weight.

**North & Central Shepherd:** Alligator weed has been found in the Central Shepherd Wetland having thoroughly taken over one of the ponds there, allegedly since last May when it was apparently absent. The best spray for this plant is Metsulfron but a special permit is needed to spray it over water. This entails considerable public consultation and so we were delighted that some DoC personnel, already authorised to spray this species in the same general area, were able to include this pond by the Whangamarino River as well.

Yellow flag is also a major weed in the Central Shepherd Block by Island Block Road especially. Now that the water level has fallen to allow practical access, a private contractor is going to sort it out.

**Cock's Wetland:** We also learnt that there is also yellow flag growing on a pond in the Cock's Wetland. This is a serious weed that we try to keep the lid on wherever possible, so it is disappointing that it has been left unchecked by one of the pond-holders there. Once again DoC staff were able to lend a hand once we found them suitable access keys.

**Piggott Wetland:** Just a note that the cormorant species identified nesting in our Piggott Wetland by David Lawrie of Birds NZ, (previously known as the Ornithological Society of NZ), is much the same Black Shag species as one that has recently come onto the game licence in parts of Europe. It seems numbers grew to the point that sustained angler outrage saw this dramatic change in status of the once protected species there. Now hunters with life-like decoys hunt them and even eat them, with suggested "Stroganoff" recipes in hunting magazines. However the flesh of cormorants is said by one published British chef to be so bad that "even a starving vulture wouldn't eat it". Our ones should be safe from the casserole dish as they remain strictly protected.

The Waikato Regional Council have asked for an engineering plan to supplement our Piggott Wetland consent for the relatively modest works proposed. There is more detail in ours than one of the major waterway projects they're poised to undertake over many kilometres of local canals in much the same area.

Yellow flag control is also planned for this wetland by staff, once the diabolical weather provides a window that is not already committed for trend flights, banding, etc. At least access is now practical for a vehicle.

Tradescantia eating beetles are now scheduled for a March/April release by Landcare Research as there is a large demand by local Councils for them that has to be satisfied first. Our site is evidently very well suited for trial plots.

## Project 1231 Non Council Land

**Wetland Projects:** David has been to conduct audits on WCEET and GBHT funded wetlands in order to give updates to the funders and advise landowners with ongoing maintenance activities.

**Trapping trial:** We purchased 10 of the Good Nature gas powered traps and placed them on private land surrounding some of our recently constructed wetlands. Each trap is coupled with a game camera, which have been freed up after the angler use study. We also have standard DOC 200 traps in the area. We aim to capture predator interactions and get an idea of catch rates compared to standard traps. The possum traps are working well, with an average kill rate of 3 animals per trap for every 3 week interval. We are yet to catch any stoats in the A-24 traps and Good Nature have been contacted to see if we can make any further improvements to our trapping regime. The cameras are capturing some interesting interaction, with the stoat lure attracting a number of cats and possums, just not the target species.



Cat coming in to check on stoat trap lure. This animal was caught in a Timms trap 800m away.

**Landowner site visits:** Two further site visits were conducted with landowners wishing to create wetland habitat on their properties.

**Kopuku Plan:** David conducted a site visit with BBO hydrologist Eugene Vodjansky in order to discuss further options to increase the hydraulic retention time of the open water areas at the site.

**Lake Pupuke:** Alligator weed is also spreading across this lake despite our prior warnings to Auckland Council. One little patch ignored has since spread over a much larger front. If something isn't done soon it will occupy the entire margin of the lake.

**Giant Reed:** We have also assisted Landcare Research with Giant Reed locations as our field staff travel to some pretty out of the way locations. This weed, rated as one of the worst in the world, can be found on Motukanae Island, (a.k.a. Sulphur Island), Lake Waikare, among many other places. It is proposed to use biocontrol to check it.

## **OUTPUT 3 PARTICIPATION**

### **Project 1311 Access negotiation**

Adam has contacted WAMS again about the access points on the fish and game web page with no response and was asked by WAMS staff to add more signs on the Awakino river.

### **Project 1341 Other Publications**

Adam has been writing the monthly reel life.

## **OUTPUT 4 PUBLIC INTERFACE**

### **Project 1431 Liaison Advocacy**

**Waipa Peat Lakes and Wetlands Accord:** David attended the bi-monthly meeting. This accord has been up and running for 15 years now and there will be a re-signing of the accord prior to the council meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup>, to commemorate the achievements and re-affirm the various agencies commitments. Councillors should have all received an invite in case anyone is interested in attending

### **Project 1442 Public Awareness**

Adam was interviewed by Radio live for their weekly fishing show.

## **OUTPUT 5 LAW ENFORCEMENT**

### **Project 1511 Ranging**

Adam responded to complaints of poaching in Putaruru and Limeworks Loop Rd during December.

**B. Wilson**  
**Chief Executive.**