

# AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF

If you require further elaboration or clarification of items contained herein, or any other matters relating to F&G business, please don't hesitate to contact your local councillor or the office.

## Matters arising from the Council Meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> August 2022

1. The Chairman welcomed the new C.E. of NZF&G, Corina Jordan, to the meeting. Ms Jordan updated Councillors on her background as both a field officer and RMA officer with Wellington F&G, followed by seven and half years with Beef & Lamb establishing and co-ordinating their RMA efforts. She had previously been the North Island Manager for Beef & Lamb and was very excited to return to Fish & Game. Ms Jordan noted she had only been in the job for three weeks but saw helping the organisation to work more co-operatively as a priority, especially given all the legislative changes facing F&G.
2. Ms Jordan commented on Council's efforts with Heathy Rivers (Plan Change 1), noting that this plan change set a precedent for other regions in that it was the first regional plan in NZ to set environmental limits based on Te Mana o te Wai. Councillor Williamson inquired as how this advocacy effort would impact on Lake Waikare; in particular, "*how can we be sure that the targets will be met*"? Mr Wilson replied that the targets under the *Vision and Strategy* were legally enforceable. The overall objective of Plan Change 1 was to set short-term targets towards achieving the 80-year goals in the *Vision and Strategy*. If these targets weren't met, then more restrictive regulations would be imposed in the next round.
3. The Chairman updated the meeting on his talks with the Chairman of Northland F&G about the potential merging of the two regions. Northland's position was that while they were not enthusiastic about the merger, they recognised the financial advantages of a merger with Auckland/Waikato and accepted that issues such as finding councillors for a small region was a problem.
4. Councillors discussed the potential use of social media for promoting Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game. It was agreed that a group be established to discuss social media initiatives. The group to comprise of Mr Dyer and Councillors Barnes, Juby and Dickey.
5. Mr Wilson's report on ranger training was tabled that recommended the recruitment and training of new honorary rangers. It was agreed that clubs would be approached first for potential candidates for new rangers.
6. Mr Dyer's report on structures on Council's land in the Waikato Delta was tabled. Mr Wilson noted that the report was produced in response to a request from Councillors based on the principle that we "can't manage what we don't know". Mr Dyer emphasised that all the structures in the report were on F&G land including those structures some distance into the river as properties boundaries did not always follow land boundaries due to accretion and movement of the islands. Ownership of the majority of structures was unknown.
7. Mr Wilson reminded Councillors that an extensive review of the game regulations would be undertaken for the December Council meeting. He had already received request from members of the public for drift shooting to be banned between Cambridge and Hamilton on the Waikato River due to increased urbanisation and the presence of walking/cycle tracks.
8. The Chairman spoke on his proposal that Fish & Game should have a closer relationship with other organisations representing hunters and gathers, including saltwater fishing groups such as Legasea as well as other hunting agencies such as BGAC and NZDA. The purpose being to raise the profile and advocacy for sustainable management of wild foods. The Chairman emphasised that we already had a close relationship with Forest & Bird and other environmental agencies but had put little effort into other relationships. He believed that iwi would also favour participating in sustainable management of wild foods. It was agreed that NZ Fish & Game Council be asked to consider a strategy for a closer relationship with other agencies that have an interest in the sustainable management of wild foods.

## Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report

- **Banding workshop:** David Klee and Roslyn Simmonds attended a 3-day workshop attend by key staff from each of the Nth Island F&G regions. All areas of game bird management were covered with particular focus on streamlining data entry, analysis and reporting.
- **Harvest Assessment: Game:** Preliminary figures indicate that total and average harvest were low again this year. The number of ducks shot per hour of 0.5 is below the 30-year average of 0.58 and the 10 year average of 0.52.
- **Fish Releases:** Adam Daniel released 200 1-year-old trout in Lake Whatihua and 200 2-year-old rainbow trout in Parkinson Lake.
- **National Environmental Standards for Freshwater / National Policy Statement for Freshwater:** We contributed extensively to the national F&G submission on the proposed changes to the NES and NPS Freshwater, with particular emphasis on proposed changes to natural wetland provisions. In response to our previous submission (coordinated by Mischa Davis) the maintenance of maimai and vegetation clearance for wetland restoration (500m<sup>2</sup>) are now permitted activities, but with extensive conditions including lodging a workplan with the relevant regional council.
- **Waikato Coastal Plan Submission:** We prepared a submission on the draft Waikato Coastal Plan, which was based on previous feedback given by Mischa Davis on prior consultation documents. The glaring issue of concern was the proposed banning of existing maimai in the RAMSAR Wetland area of the Firth of Thames, which includes the lower reaches of inflowing rivers (Waihou, Piako, Waitakaruru) – a very popular area for gamebird hunting. In reply to our request for clarification, it appears that this rule will be deleted. However, the draft Plan still contains rules that will make the building of new maimai either prohibited or requiring a consent in almost all areas of the Waikato coastal zone where recreational game bird hunting currently occurs.
- **Feedback on the pre-notification draft of the Waitomo District Plan:** Feedback was provided on key issues affecting hunters and anglers, habitat, and AWFG operations in the Waitomo District:
- **Waihi WWTP:** An objection was lodged on the consent application for a 7 year consent for the Waihi wastewater treatment plant.
- **Wildlife Act Review:** We provided substantial feedback on preliminary aspects the Wildlife Act Review. There are significant risks but also some opportunities for Fish and Game to consider. It should be noted that this will be a 'first principles'-based review meaning it will be an entirely new iteration rather than a rejig of the existing Act. Some big picture items that we need to consider is the potential for co-management of native species, possible conflict between native and introduced species and the potential privatisation of hunting and fishing rights.
- **Whangamarino Weir Section 128 Review;** A draft feasibility assessment looking at the Whangamarino gates as the primary water control structure for the wetland has been completed.
- **Cambridge WWTP:** David received confirmation from Waipa DC that the Iwi liaison group has supported our application of \$50,000 from the mitigation fund for the Pokaiwhenua Project. This project is being conducted in concert with RiverCare and we now plan to augment the funding by lodging a WRA application. The total project value is \$215,000.00 over five years.
- **Consent Application for maintenance activities on F&G Wetlands:** David Klee with our consultants has aerielly mapped most of the required area for the habitat assessment study, of our wetlands with just half of the AkaAka wetland left to do.
- **Te Aroha Wetland:** David completed a funding application to the Gamebird Habitat Trust which was previously circulated to councillors. The total project budget currently sits at \$106,900 with \$19,500 being sought from the GBHT and another \$7000 from the GBHT/billion trees partnership.