

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 185th MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW
ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 15th OCTOBER 2020 AT 12.00PM**

Present

Crs David Woolner, Lindsay Lyons, Murray Ferris, Barry Roderick, Laurance Tamati, Alan Baird, Ken Coombes, Debbie Oakley, and Ngahi Bidois (arrived 1 pm).

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson, Matthew McDougall, Eben Herbert (Eastern Fish & Game), Carmel Veitch (New Zealand Fish & Game).

1.0 WELCOME AND KARAKIA

1.1 Cr David Woolner (Chairman) opened the meeting at 12.00pm, welcomed all present, and invited Cr Laurance Tamati to open the meeting with a karakia.

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 Apologies were received from Crs Geoff Thomas and Adam Rayner.

2.2 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Alan Baird) that the apologies for the 185th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [20/10/2.2]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (13 AUGUST 2020)

3.1 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Alan Baird) that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 August 2020 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [20/10/3.1]*

4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY

4.1 No items were identified for inclusion in Council policy.

5.0 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Cr Barry Roderick asked the Chairman to communicate the outcome of the Manager's remuneration review to Council by phone.

5.2 In relation to the Council's proposal to open lakes Tarawera, Okataina, and Rotoiti on the first Saturday in October next season, Cr Lindsay Lyons advised Council to put the proposition forward to the New Zealand Council outlining the reasons for the change and proposing a change to the start of the fishing season nationwide. Lindsay said that many of the high-country fisheries currently open on the first Saturday and this proposal would see lakes in the Eastern Region as well as lakes such as Wanaka and Wakatipu move to Saturday opening also.

5.3 Cr Lindsay Lyons asked whether Steve Doughty could follow up with a potential sponsor for the Fish for Gold Promotion which he had initiated discussions with last season. Andy Garrick advised that he had followed up with this sponsor and advised that it was not feasible to gain sponsorship from them at the time but agreed it warranted revisiting. Cr Barry Roderick was surprised that few anglers had made comments regarding the promotion not being held this opening day.

6.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

- Cr Barry Roderick - Red Stag Hunters Programme
- Cr Barry Roderick - Agency online sales
- Cr Lindsay Lyons - Election tick box

- Cr Murray Ferris - Waikaremoana Boating & Fishing Association

7.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

7.1 Councillors were asked to inform the chair of any conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest were recorded.

8.0 GAME SEASON CONDITIONS

8.1 Andy Garrick advised that Matt McDougall had identified a number of items for Council consideration, and this agenda item provided the opportunity for Council to raise any additional items it wished to be incorporated into the Game Season Conditions review. Following approval by Council the proposed conditions including recommended changes would be circulated to clubs for feedback which would be considered at the next meeting of Council.

8.2 Cr Debbie Oakley queried the dates for the special pukeko season as growers in the Western BOP area had been experiencing increasing issues with pukeko and usually at this time of year rather than in February. Matt McDougall advised that the main four month season for pukeko had just ended, and that growers were encouraged to deal with pukeko issues within the season. Growers could however, apply for a permit to disturb outside of the season if they had a particular problem.

8.3 Cr Ken Coombes requested that items 1-8 included within the 2021 Game Season Conditions agenda item be put forward as being supported and recommended by Council.

8.4 Cr Lindsay Lyons queried the need for ballot applicants to prepay their game licence with many having just purchased their season fishing licence meaning it was a significant outlay for some at the commencement of the fishing season. Matt McDougall informed Council that the requirement to pay up front was a Council decision which had been made because some hunters were putting their names in for a balloted stand but failing to turn up and occupy their stand. This meant that stands were often left vacant and denying others the opportunity to hunt on opening weekend. Matt also advised that if any hunter had difficulty in paying ahead of time, we would endeavour to accommodate them if they contacted us.

8.5 Cr Barry Roderick commented on the possibility of black swan on Tauranga Harbour developing into a greater issue as Regional Council progressed its plans around improving water quality, and this could apply to Ohiwa harbour as well. Matt McDougall expressed concern over pinpointing swan as a contributing cause to water quality issues and loss of zostera beds in the harbours as sediment washing down the rivers was known to be a major contributor to the declines in zostera. He noted that the swan population in Ohiwa harbour was relatively small and comprised approximately 50 birds only. Matt noted that special shoots took out relatively few birds and addressing Tauranga swan numbers in a meaningful way was not a straightforward task. Barry suggested Council needs to develop a plan to deal with this. Andy Garrick agreed a management strategy was required but before we're able to do this we need a much better understanding of population dynamics. We have an insight into seasonal numbers which vary immensely between winter and summer, but we don't know where the birds breed other than it not being on the harbour, and we don't have sufficient knowledge of where they come from and go to to devise an effective and socially acceptable way of significantly reducing and numbers and maintaining these. Two or three years ago BOPRC and the University of Waikato's Coastal Marine Field Station were keen to collaborate with us and sponsor research to answer the critical questions we have but for various reasons this didn't eventuate. Andy noted we'll continue to

monitor summer numbers but we needed to avoid adverse publicity generated from culls as we have had in the past. Cr David Woolner agreed ongoing monitoring of the situation was required.

9.0 WAIKAREMOANA SPORTS FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT FUND

9.1 Andy Garrick provided a summary of spending from the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund for the 2019-20 financial year advising that not all funds which were allocated had been utilised as some of the planned work had coincided with an unprogrammed project funded by Genesis Energy.

9.2 Cr David Woolner acknowledged Council having received the update.

10.0 2019-2020 PERFORMANCE REPORT

10.1 Cr David Woolner provided Council with the opportunity to comment on the Draft 2019-2020 Performance Report which had been circulated to Council prior to the meeting. Andy Garrick informed Council that the auditor was due to arrive on 27 October to commence their audit of the report, and the final audited copy would be presented at Council's next meeting.

10.2 There was no feedback on the draft report, and Cr David Woolner asked that it be recorded that Council had received the Performance Report comprising the Statement of Service Performance and Financial Statements for the 2019-2020 year.

11.0 DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR RESERVES

11.1 Cr David Woolner informed Council that this item was for discussion only and did not require resolutions from Council at this stage. He advised that the NZ Council Standing Finance Committee had been tasked with establishing a "Reserves Policy". A questionnaire had come out for feedback a few months ago which staff and some councillors had provided feedback on. He advised that although the item was labelled as "Draft Policy" he understood it was more of a discussion document for further feedback. David invited Carmel Veitch to talk to the item.

11.2 Carmel summarised several points which she felt needed further modelling and consideration. Council and staff also provided feedback and items discussed included the following:

- Rather than being a governance committee, the proposed National Audit and Risk Committee should be comprised of management staff as collating information and monitoring are operational matters. This committee would report to the NZC.
- 30-50% required reserve levels – more modelling and region specific assessment required as some regions could operate on lower levels.
- Holding reserves in excess of 50% beyond a defined period of time should require quarterly explanation rather than approval from the NZC.
- Drawing down reserves to below minimum level outside the annual budgeting process however, should require approval to avoid regions doing this at will, as spending of reserves has an impact on the whole organisation. The current but not always followed policy of requiring exceptional funding to be approved is appropriate.
- There is a need for better monitoring and reporting of reserves than is currently the case.
- Assets/trust funds not related to cash reserves should be dealt with via a separate policy.

- Smaller regions need higher reserve levels to support cashflow.
 - Regions receiving grants should have those adjusted in accordance with the level of reserves they hold and are able to draw on.
 - It would be more appropriate to review reserves policy once the National Governance and Organisational Review has been completed.
 - There are currently no consequences to operating outside of policy, and changes to the legislation may be required to enable enforcement.
 - Trigger points are needed which when met or exceeded must be reported.
 - Bequests for specific use, if not restricted reserves more generally, should be notified to the NZC to ensure these are not used for any other purpose.
 - NZC reserves should be separated out into reserves for NZC and reserves retained and administered for national purposes, e.g. Dedicated Reserves to meet statutory obligations (RMA and Research) should be National Reserves, not NZC Reserves.
- 11.3 Cr Barry Roderick asked whether the Back-Country Fishery Reserve balance could be included within the finance report. Kate Thompson confirmed that she could incorporate a balance sheet from Xero to show the Reserve levels.
- 11.4 Cr David Woolner welcomed Cr Ngahi Bidois to the meeting at 1pm. Ngahi apologised to the meeting for his late arrival.
- 11.5 Andy Garrick added that we want to develop a policy that does not encourage frivolous spending but also does not discourage regions from generating alternative sources of revenue in addition to licence income and R3 initiatives.
- 11.6 Cr David Woolner requested Andy prepare a report with staff comments, Council's feedback to date, and Carmel's recommendations, and distribute this to Council via email for additional comment. He asked Councillors to submit their feedback to Andy promptly in order to get a response through to the New Zealand Council as soon as possible.
- 11.7 Andy Garrick informed Council that he had omitted adding text to this agenda item specifically addressing the treatment of Non-Resident Levy Income and the letter relating to such which had been received from the NZ Council and included in the Papers for Information for this meeting. Andy had recently received feedback from other regions that Councils were not comfortable with the New Zealand Council's decision to transfer Non-Resident Licence Levy Reserve funds to the General Reserves pool for operational use. Andy reminded Council of the criteria that this Council had put in place for spending non-resident reserve funds, and agreed with comments from other Managers that we should be able to demonstrate some level of accountability to non-resident anglers. Andy advised that the NZ Council had not consulted regions on this proposition prior to its resolution, and would like to understand what this Council's position was.
- 11.8 Cr Ken Coombes queried what the justification was for requiring non-resident anglers to pay more for their licence if it was simply going to go into a general slush fund?
- 11.9 Cr Lindsay Lyons was concerned that the item was not on the agenda and therefore should not be included in today's discussions. Cr Murray Ferris suggested it be moved to General Business to enable further discussion. Cr Barry Roderick felt it should be dealt with under this Reserves Policy agenda item and proposed the following:
- 11.10 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Murray Ferris) that Council discussion on the "Treatment of Non-Resident Levy Income" form part of the "Reserves Policy" discussion. [20/10/11.10]***

- 11.11 Carmel Veitch confirmed that Council needed to discuss the item now as the outcome of today's discussion would impact where these funds would sit in the 2019-2020 annual accounts.
- 11.12 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Ken Coombes) that the New Zealand Council be asked to put on hold its decision to treat Non-Resident Levy income as Licence income and all Non-Resident Levy Reserves to become General Reserves in the regions in which they are currently held, on the basis that regions had not been consulted prior to the decision being taken and needed to be. [20/10/11.12]*
- 11.13 *Agreed (Ken Coombes/Murray Ferris) that for the purpose of the 2019-2020 Annual Performance Report, the Non-Resident Levy Reserve funds shall remain set aside for the purposes originally established, and will not be transferred to the General Reserves pool at this time. [20/10/11.13]*

12.0 IMPORT PROHIBITION CUSTOMS (TROUT) ORDER

- 12.1 Andy Garrick advised that typically this item had not come before Council as historically DOC have liaised directly with Regional Managers, but DOC have asked the NZ Council for their position on the matter. He advised that Fish & Game has always opposed the importation of trout flesh or associated products to protect wild populations from illegal harvest and from introduced disease. Andy also suggested that should the Trout Farming propositions go ahead, and New Zealand becomes an exporter of trout, this might mean that it is obliged to accept the importation of trout products under some reciprocal trade agreements.
- 12.2 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Alan Baird) that Council advocates for the ongoing prohibition of trout (live or dead), and any product or derivative obtained from trout (e.g. milt or ova). [20/10/12.2]*

13.0 APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS AND OTHER POSITIONS FOR 2021

- 13.1 Cr David Woolner left the Chair and Andy Garrick called for nominations for the position of Chair.
- 13.2 *Moved (Murray Ferris/Ken Coombes) that Cr David Woolner be nominated for Council Chair. [20/10/13.2]*
- 13.3 There were no further nominations, and Cr David Woolner was declared Council Chairman.
- 13.4 Cr David Woolner called for nominations for the position of Deputy Chair.
- 13.5 *Moved (Debbie Oakley/Laurance Tamati) that Cr Ngahi Bidois be nominated for Council Deputy Chair. [20/10/13.5]*
- 13.6 There were no further nominations, and Cr Ngahi Bidois was declared Council Deputy Chair.
- 13.7 Cr David Woolner wished to acknowledge Cr Lindsay Lyons decision to step down from the New Zealand Council appointee role and his incredible 12 years' service to the New Zealand Council, six of those as its Chairman. David called for nominations for the position of New Zealand Council appointee.
- 13.8 *Moved (David Woolner/Ken Coombes) that Debbie Oakley be nominated for NZ Council appointee. [20/10/13.8]*
- 13.9 There were no further nominations and Cr Debbie Oakley was declared NZ Council appointee.
- 13.10 Cr Barry Roderick suggested that Cr Lindsay Lyons should attend the final NZ Council meeting for this year in the role of the Eastern Region appointee, and felt it would be a great opportunity for Cr Debbie Oakley to attend also as an observer. Council supported

this approach and Cr Lindsay Lyons suggested it would be a good opportunity for him to introduce Debbie to the existing Council and the role in general, acknowledging the huge time commitment and the importance of having a good understanding of each meeting's agenda. Lindsay was thrilled to have Debbie take on the role and wished her all the best, confirming he was willing to help where he could. Cr Debbie Oakley was happy to attend the first meeting, and asked that a space be reserved on this Council's agenda in future for discussing agenda items the NZ Council would be considering that warranted consideration and input from this region.

13.11 Council proceeded with confirmation of Matt McDougall's appointment as its representative on the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust.

13.12 Moved (Ken Coombes/Murray Ferris) that Council confirms Matthew McDougall as its representative on the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust. [20/10/13.12]

14.0 DATES FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS IN 2021

14.1 Agreed (Murray Ferris/Ken Coombes) that the following schedule of meeting dates and locations be confirmed:

	Date	Venue	Key Topics
1	<i>11 February 2021</i>	Rotorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Priorities
2	<i>8 April 2021</i>	Rotorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OWP – first draft plus bids proposed for contestable funds
3	<i>10 June 2021</i>	Rotorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licence Fees • OWP – second draft
4	<i>5 August 2021</i>	Rotorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise OWP
5	<i>7 October 2021</i>	Rotorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game Conditions – initial consideration • Annual Performance Report - draft
6	<i>2 December 2021</i>	Rotorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game Conditions – finalise recommendations
AGM	<i>2 December 2021</i>	Rotorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Annual Performance Report

[20/10/14.1]

15.0 SPECIES MONITORING REPORTS

15.1 Cr Ken Coombes understood that hunters had been impressed with the way that Fish & Game had dealt with the Covid lockdown and the uncertainties it had created around the Game Hunting Season. However, he had been surveyed for the Game Hunter Survey and was surprised that he had not been asked whether he enjoyed the season this year. He said that despite not personally getting many birds, his wife had got a few, and they had had a great season. Matt McDougall advised this question had not been asked this year, and noted there was a need to design a non-leading and better phrased question than had previously been used to assess hunter satisfaction.

15.2 Cr Barry Roderick acknowledged the staff effort that went into these surveys and the value of the data collected.

- 15.3 Council received the summaries for the 2019-20 Summer Creel Survey, the 2020 Paradise Shelduck and Black Swan Trend Counts, the 2020 National Shoveler Count, and the 2020 Eastern Region Game Hunter Survey.

16.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

16.1 *Department of Conservation*

No report.

16.1 *Te Arawa Lakes Trust*

No report.

Andy Garrick briefed Council on the Te Arawa Lakes Trust contribution to the opening of the fishing season on the lakes and acknowledged and thanked Crs Roderick, Lyons, and Ferris for their help on the day also. Lindsay noted that there had been some good coverage on TV1 news from Lake Tarawera, and Andy said that Lake Rotoiti had seen some good coverage on Facebook as well.

16.2 *The New Zealand Fish and Game Council*

Cr Lindsay Lyons advised that a good proportion of the most recent NZ Council meeting had been held in Public Excluded Session. He advised that the Governance Review Committee had spoken to the New Zealand Council for the first time. Lindsay noted that the decision taken to enable Pheasant Preserves to continue to operate under Schedule 3 by removing the current expiry date was contentious. He commented this would pave the way for anyone to charge fees to fish for sports fish or hunt game birds or access resources on or adjoining their land. Cr Alan Baird noted that Fish & Game sells licences and the right to hunt, and private individuals doing the same thing is no different. Cr Debbie Oakley expressed concern about a NZC Councillor being allowed to vote despite having declared a conflict of interest in this matter, and Eben Herbert commented that a major issue associated with the commercial preserves' decision was that it removed Fish & Game's mandate and ability to manage this species wherever it occurred.

17.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

- 17.1 Cr Barry Roderick queried the Regional Council removal of willows and other trees on the Ngongotaha. Andy Garrick advised this had been undertaken in close association with Fish & Game, the areas affected were to be replanted bearing in mind the need to retain access for anglers.

- 17.2 Cr Ken Coombes queried whether Fish & Game used to undertake the Ohau Channel surveys? Andy Garrick advised that Fish & Game designed the survey and Regional Council funded and implemented it using contractors. He understood that this year the survey had been undertaken by a local person nominated by Te Arawa Lakes Trust.

- 17.3 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Ken Coombes) that Council receives the Management Report. [20/10/17.3]*

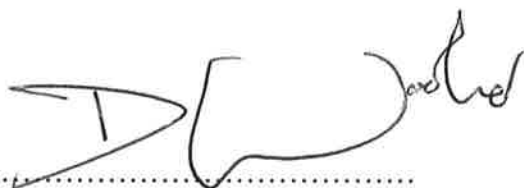
- 17.4 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Ken Coombes) that Council receives the Health and Safety Report. [20/10/17.4]*

- 17.5 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Ken Coombes) that Council receives the Finance Report and approves payments for July and August 2020 totalling \$269,233.56. [20/10/17.5]*

- 14.8 Kate Thompson provided Council with licence sales worm graphs showing a comparison of the early season sales by LEQ and category compared with last season.

18.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

- 18.1 Cr Barry Roderick expressed some concern over a recent airing of the Red Stag Hunters Programme which appeared to focus on hunters taking down as many birds as possible and felt it was not a good look for Fish and Game. Cr Ngahi Bidois suggested that concerns could be raised in writing with the programme producers to ensure they portrayed processing/plucking and the food to the table message as well in segments such as these. Eben Herbert felt that this particular segment was unusual for the show and overall, it was very professional and high on promoting the food for the table message.
- 18.2 Cr Barry Roderick noted the early season Agent Online sales and highlighted the need to maintain good relationships with licence agents.
- 18.3 Cr Laurance Tamati excused himself from the meeting at 2.30pm.
- 18.4 Questions were raised in relation to the Fish & Game Council election tick box linked to the process of purchasing a licence and whether its default setting should be “yes”. Recently some Councillors had not been asked by agents whether they wished to vote and this appears to be quite a common occurrence. Kate Thompson advised that the current legislation requires licence holders to indicate their wish to vote rather than being automatically enrolled. Andy Garrick said that after the 2015 election a review had been undertaken of the election process and that had recommended automatic enrolment. He advised he had communicated Council’s 2015 electoral review recommendations to the Organisational Review Panel when they visited recently. Cr Ken Coombes suggested licence holders needed to be educated on Fish & Game Councils and the election process.
- 18.5 Cr Murray Ferris informed Council that the Waikaremoana Boating and Fishing Association had recently considered disbanding but were now back up and running. They were keen to reapply for funding for the shallow water navigation markers Council had previously approved, and were keen to attend a Council meeting in the near future.
- 19.0 MEETING CLOSED**
- 19.1 The meeting closed at 2.47pm with a closing karakia by Cr Ngahi Bidois.



David Woolner
Chairman

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

2.0 APOLOGIES

- 2.2 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Alan Baird) that the apologies for the 185th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [20/10/2.2]*

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[20/10/14.1]

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