

**WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON  
TUESDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2017 AT 3.00PM AT WAIRARAPA SERVICES & CITIZENS CLUB,  
20 ESSEX ST, MASTERTON**

**1. Present:**

Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Andrew Morris, Dan Waechter, Simon Muckley, Marc Flaws, Malcolm Francis, Don Scott, Paul Shortis

**2. In Attendance:**

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Hamish Carnachan

Don Adams (Wellington Conservation Board)

**3. Apologies:**

Councillors Eric Neumann, Brad Johnson, Chris O'Meara, Jim Cook, Andy Tannock

**It was then moved that:**

***the apologies be accepted.***

**Malcolm Francis/Simon Muckley**

Carried

**4. Conflicts of Interest**

A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of Interest. No new conflicts of interest were declared.

**5. Minutes of Previous Meeting of 6 December 2016**

After a brief discussion it was moved that:

***the Minutes of the Meeting of Wellington Fish & Game Council of 6 December 2016 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.***

**Dan Waechter/Malcom Francis**

Carried

**6. Matters Arising**

Chairman Cotsilinis noted that a letter had been sent to NZ Fish & Game Council indicating that Wellington Fish & Game Council were disappointed at the way the issue of considering reviewing continued use of lead shot in sub-12gauge ammunition for waterfowl hunting had been concluded - given that there was an agreed and expected process for review to be undertaken in 2017. It was agreed to seek acknowledgement of receipt of letter from NZ

Council, and request an indication as to how they were going to act on the letter. Mr Teal was requested to bring this issue up at the F&G Managers Meeting to gauge positions on this issue of various regional Fish & Game councils.

It was noted that there was no known supporting information or by-law prohibiting motorised craft on Lake Wairarapa and its wetlands and that it was an advisory in the access permit booklet distributed by Fish & Game.

**7. Minutes of Previous In-Committee Meeting of 6 December 2016**

After a brief discussion it was moved that:

***the In-Committee Minutes of the Meeting of Wellington Fish & Game Council of 6 December 2016 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.***

**Paul Shortis/Andrew Morris**

Carried

**8. NZ Council Business**

There had not been a NZ Fish & Game Council Meeting since the last Wellington Fish & Game Council meeting. Councillor Morris had no other major issues to report that had arisen since the meeting in November 2017.

**9. Public Participation**

Don Adams (Wellington Conservation Board) noted that the issues surrounding predator control were relevant for hunters. He also made comment on the increased numbers of swans at Henley Lake, Masterton.

**10. Health & Safety Update**

Mr Teal noted that there had been some development of health and safety reporting sheets which prioritised attention based on highest risk and how to mitigate such. He outlined that staff had an intentions sheet and reporting protocol, had undertaken First Aid training and certification where required, and were vigilant in using safety equipment. Councillor Scott considered that a specific role should be established that monitored field activities and reporting. It was confirmed that a reporting system is in place that should be able to satisfy the minimum requirements of Worksafe NZ auditing.

Mr Teal noted that other Fish & Game regions were progressing electronic Apps with providers that could be uptaken by wider Fish & Game. Councillor Francis noted that there were a number of electronic options and reporting apps available. He reiterated that staff must be in a position to identify high

risk in activities and actions that must be taken to mitigate such. He considered an example of drift dive activities where grade 3-5 rapids are known to exist and what 'on day' briefings are undertaken and recorded relative to variables of water flow.

Councillor Francis would investigate the possibility of a joint Fish & Game – ACC – Worksafe assessment for establishing consistency of approach to Health and Safety planning and implementation amongst regions.

**11. Recommendations for 2017 Game Regulations**

The game season conditions were considered by Wellington Fish & Game Council for Wellington region and recommendations confirmed on 6 December 2016. There was no additional information considered materially different to alter any of those recommendations made – other than higher than normal rainfall and water levels over the late spring and early summer which generally supported waterfowl survival over this period.

There are two species, namely black swan and paradise shelduck where recommendations are made following counts in mid January.

**Paradise Shelduck**

Trend counts conducted in January 2017 noted that there is a continued long term (20 year) decline in numbers but trends in the last five years had been relatively stable. A season length of eight birds was considered precautionary but also noted that the extended ten week season to allow an extra two weeks beyond the main waterfowl season had not engendered much positive response but had created some uncertainty as to the end of the overall waterfowl season.

After discussion it was moved that

*A recommendation be made to the Minister of Conservation for season conditions for paradise shelduck be eight birds limit per day per hunter and that the season be of eight week duration. There would not be a special summer season held in the 2018 February period*

**Andrew Morris/Marc Flaws**

Carried

**Black swan**

Trend counts conducted in January 2017 noted that number were relatively high (>1,500 birds –actual count number 2,300) in the Wellington West and (>5,000 birds – actual number 5,076) Wellington East but were in the normal range for central New Zealand totals (13,000-16,000 – actual number

15,622). Council considered the regulation setting policy adopted at the November 2011 Council meeting.

After further discussion it was moved

*A recommendation be made to the Minister of Conservation for season conditions for black swan be three birds limit per day per hunter and that the season be of eight week duration over the entire Wellington area.*

**Simon Muckley/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

All other season conditions considered for 2017 game season and had been recommended to the Minister of Conservation remained unchanged.

**12. Western Greater Wellington River Management - Update**

Mr Teal noted that the consent applications had finally been notified by GWRC (Flood Protection) which covered the Hutt, Wainuiomata, Otaki, and Waikanae rivers. The submission period was advertised to be due by early April.

General discussion ensued on each of the rivers with specific comments made on:

*Waikanae River:* being managed to high level flows that occur on an infrequent basis, gravel extraction had occurred above the weir, gravel extraction was being planned for the lower reaches, and timing is important to avoid potential effects of works;

*Hutt River:* ripping had regularly occurred below Kennedy Good Bridge, ripping to waters edge had recently been indicated to be a practice to be limited or avoided.

Mr Teal noted that the Code of Practice was potentially an important management tool that would require peer review to ensure activities covered by the document were suitable in maintaining desirable environmental outcomes. He noted that he would be discussing potential advice being sought from a consultant that had expertise.

**13. One Plan Implementation Case - Update**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the proceedings in the Environment Court which commenced on 13 February 2017 and expected all the evidence to be heard by the 17 February 2017. He noted that the legal team of the Regional Council had focussed on their level of discretion available under their interpretation of restricted discretionary. Discussion ensued on the potential

implications of decisions/judicial declarations made and course of actions available to Horizons Regional Council and Fish & Game NZ.

**14. Wairarapa Water Update**

Item deferred until later in meeting.

**15. Lake Wairarapa Moana Update**

Mr Teal gave an overview of the programme of fish removal undertaken at Barton's Lagoon and Boggy Pond – with the former focusing on introduced fish removal and the latter on perch egg removal. Concern was expressed that a transparent process needed to be followed by DoC and Regional Council into the short and long term objectives of fish removal proposals – particularly for open systems. It was considered that Fish & Game needed to be actively involved in any decisions on proposals. Further it was highlighted that Fish & Game had been proactively involved in the Barton Lagoon project to manage the wider concerns of anglers regarding fish removal. This required careful and prudent management of public awareness and there had been an agreement that Fish & Game would be involved in communications to the public. There was a request for a meeting between DoC and Fish & Game to discuss these matters as DoC couldn't unilaterally override regulations relating to sports fish. DoC would also be invited to make a presentation to the next Fish & Game Council meeting to keep an open dialogue and consultation going.

**16. Mallard Research Project**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the mallard research projects and confirmed that analyses had been undertaken by Massey University students during banding looking at potential heavy metal accumulation (including lead) in the blood that may affect fecundity. Samples were also taken for a US based research project on DNA analysis for origin of mallard and grey ducks.

**17. Junior Angler Participation – Fish in Schools**

Mr Carnachan gave a brief overview of participation in schools with two tank set-ups being considered for Brooklyn School and another in Masterton. Councillor Scott indicated that the schools be contacted and seek confirmation of involvement. Discussion ensued on whether there is a preference for placement of tanks in rural schools to enable a more direct connection by the students to everyday relevant issues. It was intended that the sub-committee would meet after the Council meeting and discuss sustainability of the project and potential expansion.

**18. Recognition of Contributions**

Mr Teal gave an overview of options to recognise contribution of volunteer and service providers discussed at the previous Annual General Meeting.

After brief discussion it was agreed that the process proposed for a brief summary of contribution to various fish and game operational function categories was appropriate and consideration be given to a more formal ceremony for presentation.

After discussion of the specific design of a recognition medal, it was moved

***That 100 Fish & Game medals be produced that has the Fish & Game logo on the front – with Fish and Game’s legislative purpose included on the outer circle – and that the other side of the medal remain blank for personalised engraving.***

**Malcolm Francis/Don Scott**

Carried

**19. Management Report 1 December 2016 -31 January 2017**

Mr Carnachan explained situation regarding access at the confluence of the Waiohine and Ruamahanga rivers by the gliding club – with clarification being sought from the District Council on what options are available to ensure practical access for anglers

Mr Teal noted that staff were waiting on Cawthron Institute to provide their interpretation of the analyses of the otolith microchemistry assessments to determine future work programme for sampling.

Discussion ensued on the concept being debated widely regarding an overseas tourist levy and the potential implications for concessions for using Fish & Game resource.

The current access conditions to Bluff Road access point on the banks of the Manawatu River near Woodville appeared to be resolved but checks needed to occur on what was happening on a practical basis.

Councillor Scott provided an overview of Fish Out Day at Hokowhitu Lagoon, Palmerston North from Manawatu Freshwater Anglers Club noting a potential shortfall of \$568 of budget income but there was a prospect of one sponsor to still contribute \$500.

Mr Teal gave an overview of the environmental DNA programme and it was agreed that the proposals for research would be forwarded through the Fish & Game research programme.

Mr Teal noted that the JK Donald weir had not yet been replaced but that DoC and regional council were seeking to replace the bridge adjacent to the weir with a culvert.

Councillor Muckley expressed concerns regarding the decline in licence sales following the introduction of new licence categories. Discussion ensued on the efficacy of the licence categories and effect on revenue, noting: Local Area Licence discounting (which was not supported by Wellington Fish & Game Council), the potential leverage of the senior loyal licence being made to qualifying participants with not just a five year licence purchase history. Further discussion ensued on Issues regarding the discounting of licences and whether the pricing points was on target – noting that the objective being pursued was increased perceptions of value - not necessarily increased revenue.

Councillor Francis noted that if licence sales were lower this year that anglers participating on the rivers anecdotally appeared to be the same or higher. He considered that compliance rates needed to be assessed and other issues such as mobile freedom campers had become more prevalent. It was considered that New Zealand Fish & Game Council required a strategy to address these issues in complying with regulations. If there was extra compliance activity required – how is this resourced? - do we do away with reduced cost licences? Councillor Francis considered that Fish & Game needed to invest in to local rivers complying to regulations – and address the angler statement of “when was the last time your licence was checked?”

Councillor Muckley considered that for licence categories available and no guarantee with weather conditions that anglers would almost certainly consider a “part licence” with discount connotations. Mr Teal was requested to express these concerns at the February Managers Meeting - regarding when to review categories and understand the level of comfort for regional Fish & Game Councils to wait another year before undertaking a comprehensive review.

After discussion it was moved

***Express concern at the Managers Meeting regarding changes to the income stream due to licence category changes. It was considered that there should be an objective review, and timeframe for review, in place well before consideration of any changes to licences being offered.***

**Malcolm Francis/Don Scott**

Carried

After discussion it was moved that

***The management report for 1 December 2016 – 31 January 2017 be received.***

**Andrew Morris/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

**20. Fish & Game Licence Sales**

Mr Teal gave overview of the licence sales for fish were approximately 9% down on previous year's sales at the same period (late November), and there were several reasons postulated included inclement weather conditions causing a delay in purchase. He also noted that most agents were now agency-on-line which provided an up-to-date assessment of sales.

After further discussion it was moved

***The Fish Licence Sales report as at 31 January 2017 be received***

**Malcolm Francis/Don Scott**

Carried

**21. Expenditure Report**

Mr Teal noted that the expenditure for RMA legal cases would be separated out to provide clarity on budget progress and comparisons for variance reporting.

Councillor Scott requested that the reporting also include a summary of the Functional areas expenditure. It was agreed that the current simplified approach provides adequate disclosure, but a summary of functional area budget and actual expenditure could be added as requested.

After discussion it was moved that

***the Expenditure Report for 31 December 2016 and Financial Transactions for November and Decemberr 2016 be approved***

**Malcolm Francis/Don Scott**

Carried

**22. Correspondence and Media**

Councillor Waechter noted an item in media relating to planting the Mangaroa which was viewed as useful in leveraging background information and awareness for the letter/communications to local residents regarding enhancing spawning habitat.

After further discussion it was moved to

***Correspondence and Media reports for November2016 – January 2017 be received***

**Simon Muckley/Marc Flaws**

Carried



**23. General Business**

Councillor Scott presented a brief paper on Competition Fishing and its consistency in representing local fishing interests. He noted that claims of a mortality rate of up to 15% were high but his summary of international research on catch and release from fly or single hook was less than 4% but passive sinking from baited hooks was up to 45% or higher with active sinking baited lures 75%. He posed the questions: do high profile competitions impair or improve the fisheries? And do catch and release practice add or detract from the state of fisheries?

Chairman Cottilinis noted that competitions required several protocols and requirements to reduce potential of mortality even further than the general research indicated, such as: requiring the use of barbless hooks; fish are weighed in the water; and if major competition is held at a site then it is alternated every 3-4 years.

The main issue emanating from the paper was mortality from catch and release and potentially total numbers caught and released if mortality was material. It was related that at the world fly fishing championships on the Whanganui River in 2008, research requested and report back with over 4000 fish caught and 6 recorded mortalities of fish – with it concluded that if the fish were handled properly that mortality rates reduce.

Councillor Francis considered that treble hooks on lures may be another issue relating to potential mortality or injury to fish.

It was agreed to defer discussion until a subsequent meeting with clarification of issues to be able to provide background research.

It was also reiterated that competition organisers have to ask Fish & Game to organize a competition prior to it being conducted. .

The meeting was adjourned at 6.35pm for dinner.

The meeting was reconvened at 7.10pm

The Council agreed ***to move into Public Excluded session (at 7.10pm)***

**Andrew Morris/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

***That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting namely the agenda items:***

***Wairarapa Water Project***

***The withholding of information is necessary to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by councillors or officers and to maintain legal professional privilege and potentially commercially sensitive information.***

***This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a)(II) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982 which would be prejudiced by the holding of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public***

***Wellington F&GC move out of committee (at 7:35pm) and that the public be invited to return to the meeting.***

**Paul Shortis/Dan Waechter**

Carried

Discussion on use of tablets – Mr Teal gave an overview of costs of provision of tablets but decided to continue with status quo.

There being no further business the meeting was concluded at 7.40pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Hotel Coachman, Palmerston North, Tuesday 4 April 2017 at 3.00pm.

Chairman\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_