



AGENDA

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

9th December 2023

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held at the Waikato Deer Stalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton on Saturday 9 December 2023 commencing at 11.30 a.m. (after AGM)

AGENDA

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N Juby
Chairman

23/11/2023

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton
on Saturday 14th October 2023 commencing at 11:15am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: G. Annan
Councillors: E. Williamson, D. Cocks, P. Shaw, C. Sherrard, M. Barker, T. Clark, B. Barnes
Staff: B. Wilson, A. Daniel, D. Klee, J. Dyer.

1. APOLOGIES:

G. Dickey, N. Juby, M. Barker (lateness).

It was moved;
that apologies be accepted.

Shaw/Sherrard – CARRIED

The Chairman requested a moment of silence for the passing of ex-councillors David Syme and Dan Hartley.

The Chairman gave his personnel thanks to Dr Adam Daniel for his efforts as a member of the Raglan Coast Guard in the recent incident involving the Hamilton Fish & Game Club on a charter fishing vessel attempting to cross the Raglan bar. The Chairman also expressed his appreciation to Mr David Klee for his concerns expressed immediately after the incident.

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

Nil.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF 19th AUGUST 2023:

It was moved;
that the minutes of the previous meeting of the 19th of August 2023 be accepted as true and correct records.

Cocks/Sherrard – CARRIED

Councillor Barker joined the meeting (11.26am).

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Mr Wilson gave a brief update on the Healthy Rivers Hearing being held in the Environment Court in Auckland and Hamilton.

5. OUTWARDS COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Letters to Mr Barrie Barnes, New Zealand Fish & Game Council Chair, regarding the 2023 Levy Payment and the 2023 Performance Management Strategy were tabled.

Mr Wilson expressed his concern that the current level of expenditure by the New Zealand Council was unsustainable in the long term. Councillor Barnes disagreed and stated that the current level of expenditure was sustainable and within budget. He noted that the Governance Review was “dead” in regards to the recommendations requiring legislative change.

Councillor Williamson stressed his concerns that the NZ Council was seeking more control over the regions and regional budgets.

6. INWARDS COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

A letter from Mr Barrie Barnes, New Zealand Fish & Game Council Chair, regarding “Upcoming Cost Optimisation and Resource Allocation Project” was tabled.

Mr Barnes informed Councillors that a contract for the Allocation Project had not yet been signed, and that regions could optout.

It was agreed that the letter be reconsidered at the December Council meeting.

Councillor Cocks recommended that the NZ Council should revert to having council meetings in the regions so that they could get an appreciation of regional issues.

It was moved;

that inward and outward correspondence be accepted.

Cocks/Barker – CARRIED

7. CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S BI-MONTHLY REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

The Chairman advised that Rangitoto Lands were still advertising accommodation and trout fishing on the Outdoor HQ website. Dr Daniel replied that he had expressed his concerns over advertising for access on the Outdoor HQ website to the nation office as this was a nation issue that required legal action.

Dr Daniel in reply to a question, stated that there had been three releases of 2-year old trout into Quarry Lake (Lake Pupuke) over the last year.

Dr Daniel advised that there had been no releases into Lake Tomarata for at least 10 years and that he was advising local iwi on lake restoration.

Councillor Cocks requested that a sign be placed on the Williamson Wetland. It was agreed that a sign similar to the one recently erected on the Murray Young Wetland be funded for the Williamson Wetland.

Councillor Barker requested a copy of Mr Dyer's tree report, Mr Wilson agreed to send a copy to all Councillors.

Financial Report

General discussion on the Whangamarino weir and potential short term (repairs) and long-term expenditure (re-consenting).

It was moved;

that the Chief Executive's Bimonthly Report and Financial Statements be accepted.

Cocks/Williamson – CARRIED

The meeting rose for lunch at 12:44pm and resumed at 1:20pm.

8. UPDATE: NZ COUNCIL MEETING OF AUGUST 2023:

The update from the NZ Council meeting was tabled.

9. MINUTES OF NZ COUNCIL MEETING OF APRIL 2023:

The minutes of the NZ Council meeting of April 2023 were tabled.

Councillor Barnes informed that there were now three NZ Councillors on the National Research sub-committee.

10. 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE:

Mr Wilson asked whether Councillors agreed to approve the licence fees by email or would they prefer to have a council meeting in May.

In reply to an enquiry as to why the decision had to be made by May 31st, it was noted that the documentation had to be submitted to the Minister of Conservation by 20th June.

It was moved:

That the proposed 2024 meeting scheduled be accepted.

That the proposed licence fees be approved by Councillors in May by email.

Barker/Shaw – CARRIED

11. DRAFT POLICY ON SETTING NATIONAL POLICY:

Councillor Barnes informed Councillors that the proposed changes were required to speed up the process of setting national policy.

Mr Wilson noted that the NZ Council would no longer require a majority of regions to agree to a proposed policy. Councillor Barnes stated that this change was required so that the policy was compliant with the relevant provision of the Conservation Act.

It was moved:

That the NZ Council be informed that Council does not support the proposed changes to the Policy on setting National Policy.

Williamson/Barker – CARRIED

Councillor Barnes abstained from voting.

12. DRAFT CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY:

It was moved:

That the draft Conflict of Interest Policy be accepted by Council.

Barker/Sherrard – CARRIED

13. DRAFT STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT:

It was moved;

That the draft Staff Code of Conduct Policy be accepted by Council.

Cock/Sherrard – CARRIED

14. REMUNERATION POLICY (INFO ONLY):

Mr Wilson informed Councillors that existing staff contracts had a CPI provision included, but that regional funding in future would be based on market data. Consequently, there could be significant discrepancies between salary funding requirements and the actual funding agreed to by the NZ Council. However, Councillor Barnes disagreed and stated that this would not be a significant issue.

Mr Wilson confirmed that new staff contracts would not include a CPI provision.

15. AUCKLAND/WAIKATO POLICY REVIEW:

Mr Wilson highlighted to Councillors the policy that: *“Council reaffirms accepted governance policy that the Executive Committee (comprising the Chair & Vice Chairs) is responsible for the appointment of the Chief Executive (ratified by Council) and subsequent dealings with the appointee.”*

After discussion:

It was moved;

That the following policies are revoked:

- **Policy 17/2/2006 (Council and other land issues), Issue Piggot Block.**
- **Policy 04/10/1997 (Administration/Finance), Issue Licence Commission**
- **Policy 11/05/1992 (Administration/Finance) Licence agents**
- **Policy 04/10/1997 (Administration/Finance) Staff clothing**

That the following policies are amended:

- **Policy 27/11/93 (game com) (special seasons).**
 - the minimum fee be raised to \$10.00.
- **Policy 14/06/1990 (Issues/Advocacy) Merit wards.**
 - **Should be “Merit Awards”.**
- **Policy 19/03/2022 (Council and other land issues) Access**
 - **The addition of the clause “(dependant on funding)”.**
Cock/Williamson – CARRIED

16. 2023 DRIFT DIVE REPORT:

Dr Daniel’s Drift Dive Survey report was tabled.

Councillor Barker enquired as to why there was such huge variations in juvenile trout numbers from year to year. Dr Daniel replied that floods during late winter/autumn affected spawning success. However huge changes in juvenile numbers were also observed in spring-fed rivers that rarely flooded. Mr Wilson suggested that this may be due to winter temperatures with poor recruitment in warm winters.

17. OSH UPDATE:

Dr Daniel introduced the new SeaFlux app for monitoring the Maritime Marine requirements for Fish & Game boats.

It was moved;

that the OSH report for October 2023 is accepted.

Barker/Shaw – CARRIED

18. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Nil

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 2:52pm.

The next meeting of Council is scheduled for 9th December 2023.



AGENDA ITEM 5

13 October 2023

Nigel Juby, Auckland-Waikato Regional Council Chair
Email: nigeljuby@gmail.com
CC: Ben Wilson, CE Auckland-Waikato F&G
Email: BWilson@fishandgame.org.nz

Tēnā kōrua Nigel and Ben,

Re: 2023/24 Auckland/Waikato Levy

I hope this letter finds you well. I would like to extend my gratitude for taking the time to express the Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Council concerns regarding the 2023/24 Auckland/Waikato Levy and budget setting processes for the 2023-24 financial year. In my capacity as NZC Chair, I consulted with the NZC CEO and Licence Working Party, taking into account their valuable advice on the concerns raised by your Council and provide the following information to clarify and address these.

Firstly, I appreciate the comprehensive overview you provided regarding the background and context of your Council's concerns related to the levy increase. It is evident from your letter that your Council has been actively engaged in discussions regarding the forecasted fish licence sales and the resulting levy.

As you highlighted, the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic have significantly influenced the dynamics of fish licence sales, particularly with the absence of non-resident anglers during certain seasons. The varying effects of the pandemic on different regions have made it challenging to accurately predict sales, as evidenced by the fluctuations in sales figures over the past years. The Licence Working Party (LWP) in conjunction with NZ Council staff have worked together to set annual licence sales budgets taking into consideration the impacts of border closures and particularly the loss of non-resident revenue having a significant impact on fish licence sales. Remarkably, the 2020-21 season saw a significant rise in resident licence sales in the absence of the non-residents. The 2021-22 season however, was hit the hardest with next to no non-residents and resident licence sales falling off from the prior season and these results will have been contributed to by the lockdowns as you have mentioned in your letter. The largest declines in the country were seen by Auckland/Waikato and Eastern regions.

The information you provided regarding the historical data of fish licence sales and the comparisons between estimated and actual figures is valuable in understanding the complexities of the situation. It is clear that forecasting sales in a post-pandemic environment presents its own set of challenges, and the Auckland/Waikato region's experience is not unique in this regard.

We place a strong emphasis on transparency and fairness in our budget processes. Your request for the LWP's Terms of Reference (ToR) and meeting minutes concerning the forecasting methodology is completely understandable. However, please be aware that the ToR is presently undergoing a review to better align with the LWP's advisory role. It's important to note that the LWP offers advice to regional managers and the NZC, but it does not have the final decision-making authority. Final decisions are made by NZC, taking into account the input from managers. Therefore, the LWP minutes may not directly address your Council's concerns, as they primarily focus on operational details and action items. Instead, we have included a comprehensive explanation of the 2023-2024 forecasting methodology, as provided by the NZC CFO and LWP licencing staff, for your reference.

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

The NZC acknowledges the challenges of the contestable funding and levy process. In the April 2023 round, funding was approved for Southwick & Associates' National Pricing Optimisation Research, which aims to develop a model for Fish & Game licence fees and participation. This research will offer valuable insights into licence holders and changes over time, enabling a transparent platform to support Fish & Game's fee and licence-setting mandate for angling and gamebird hunting. Insights from related research programs, like database analysis and licence holder preferences, can contribute to cost reduction in the Pricing Optimisation Research.

To address your concerns, we've attached the pertinent papers and minutes from the February 2023 Managers meeting and 20 April 2023 Managers Meeting as well as the subsequent NZC Meeting held on 21 April 2023. These documents cover the discussions about licence reforecast for 2023/24, updated LEQ's per region based on the Non-Resident Levy being incorporated into the Licence fee, and updated Licence Category prices base on the recommended Licence prices for 2023/24 as mentioned in your letter. I'd like to highlight that the formal decision regarding forecasting was made during the Managers meeting on 20 April. You can find more details in the attached meeting minutes. Additionally, the NZC carefully reviewed the feedback from Managers and each region, as well as any concerns raised by council members during the NZC Meeting on 21 April, before arriving at a final decision.

NZC acknowledges the specific concerns brought forward by the Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Council and is committed to conducting a comprehensive review of the data and analysis provided. We understand the importance of strengthening our financial processes and establishing a more robust framework, and we recognise the need for improvement and optimisation. While we take into account the request to base the 2023/24 levy on actual sales for 2022/23, we are mindful of the broader context, encompassing challenges faced by various regions and the impact of non-resident angler returns. NZC is dedicated to carefully assessing the available options to address these concerns, and we are actively engaged in a review process aimed at achieving a solution that is fair and equitable for all regions.

In conclusion, I want to express my commitment to addressing your concerns and ensuring that our budget-setting processes are as accurate and transparent as possible. Your input is invaluable in helping us make informed decisions. I will personally oversee the review process and keep you updated on our progress.

Once again, thank you for bringing these concerns to our attention. If you have any further questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. We also thank you for your feedback on the Draft Performance Management Policy, this will be considered alongside the other regions feedback at the November 2023 NZC meeting.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Barrie Barnes
Chair
New Zealand Fish and Game Council
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Corina Jordan
Chief Executive Officer
New Zealand Fish and Game Council
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Bi-Monthly Chief Executive's Report

December 2023

OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Project 1112 Banding

Swan Banding: A second swan tracker from the Auckland Airport study was recovered when John was working nearby and called in on the landowner who found it on a dead swan on his farm near Paeroa. A number of swans use the wetlands at nearby Tee Head Pond, Awaiti, and this bird may have been intending to join them.

Auckland Airport staff have been instructed about the best time to do swan banding in the Manukau Harbour this year, namely very early January while they are moulting and before they have regained their powers of flight.

Project 1114: Annual Shoveler Survey

Shoveler Survey: John was requested by the Editor of the Ducks Unlimited, (NZ) Flight magazine to write an article describing F&G's national annual shoveler count. Dr Murray Williams provided very helpful feedback on the draft and also a valuable historic photograph to illustrate it showing shoveler banding done in years past.

John is also coordinating with 2 of the old Wildlife Service personnel to record their specialised shoveler banding techniques developed in those times, that apparently haven't otherwise been recorded.

Project 1117: Research:

Game committee: David chaired the latest national game committee meeting. Key topics included;

- The development of a national database to store population data in a coherent format so the team can more efficiently disseminate the information to regional councils and licence holders.
- Review of SOPS to ensure everyone is on board with monitoring techniques.
- Potential to conduct a national hunter satisfaction survey during the 2023 season.

Avian Influenza: David is a co-author on a paper looking at the risks of high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) to NZ bird populations, based on the years of working with MPI to collect samples from mallard and grey ducks during our annual duck banding project. MPI have scheduled a plethora of meetings in the coming weeks to work on a response should the latest strain find its way to NZ. If this were to occur it could have significant deleterious effects on many birds species including game and could risk our ability to schedule a game bird season. The risk of HPAI getting to NZ is generally considered low, but recent monitoring has indicated that infected birds can travel the required distance. Species such

as red knots have been identified as potential vectors due to their migration routes. Early detection and intervention are critical should HPAI make it here and it is hoped MPI will develop a comprehensive plan to identify potential hotspots where high-risk species are likely to arrive in N.Z.

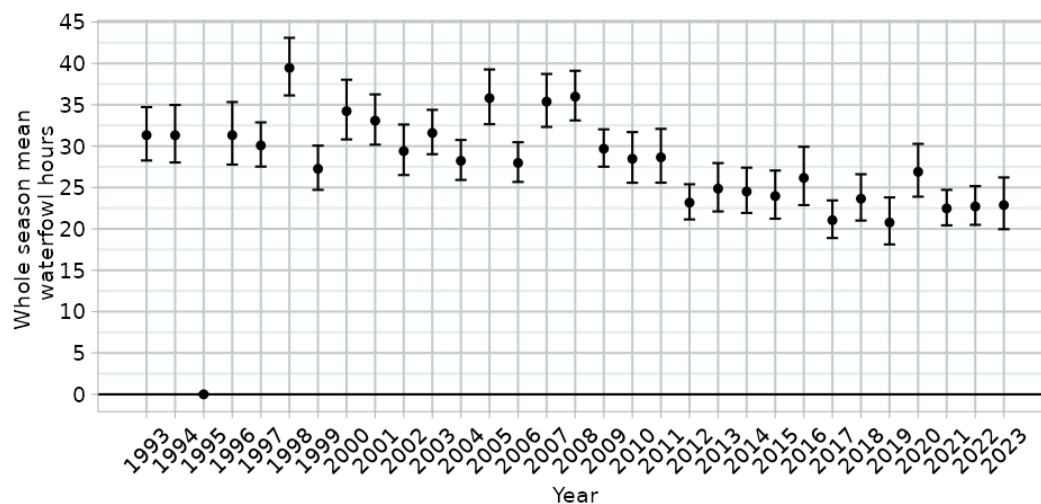
Project 1121: Fish Harvest Surveys

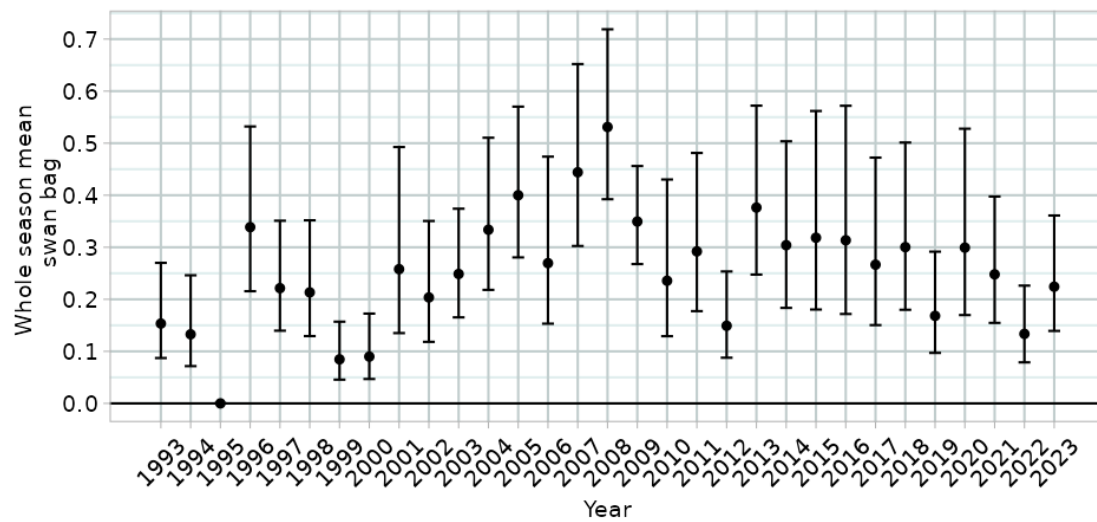
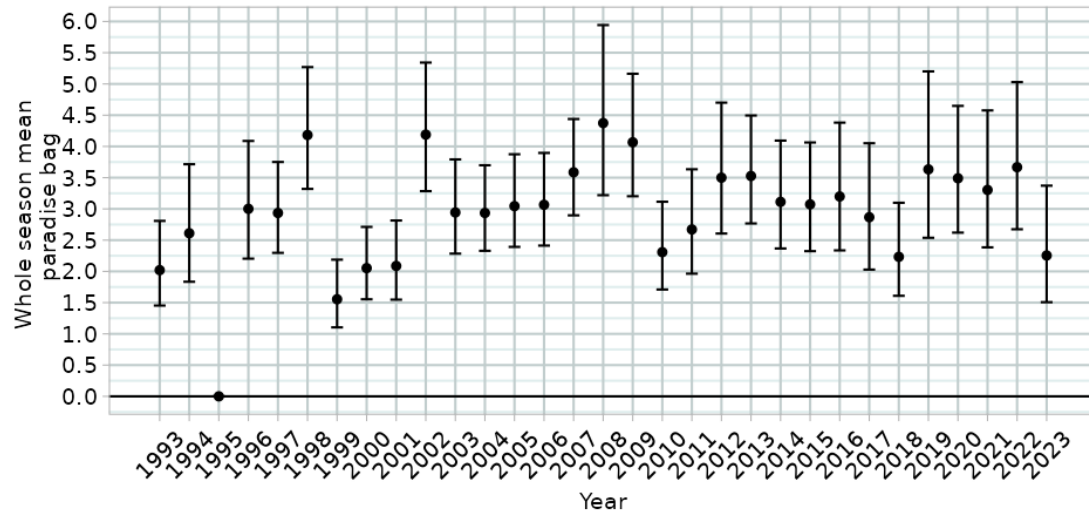
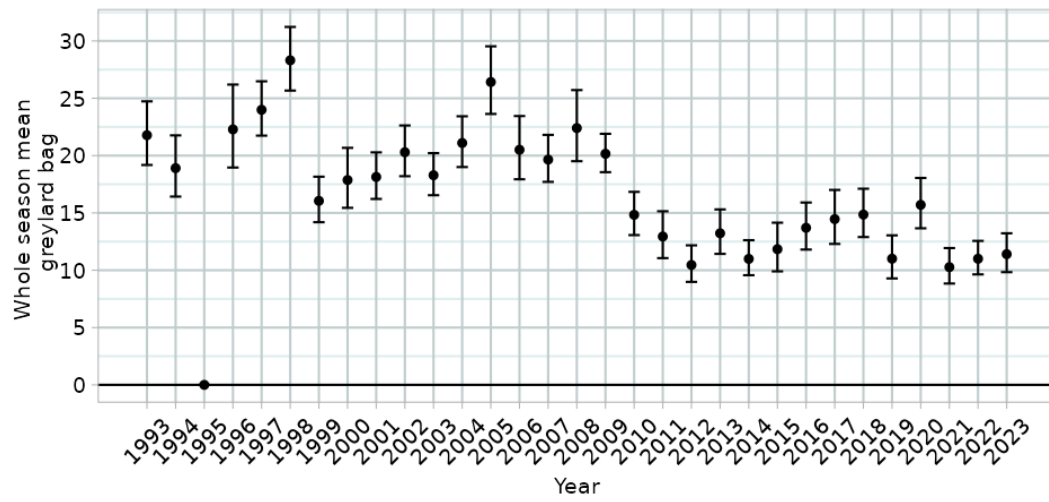
Lake Arapuni: Lake Arapuni tag data were collected to evaluate the success of sterile fish in Lake Arapuni. The report indicates that sterile fish may live long and be available to anglers for a longer period. However, to date normal fish are caught more frequently and the fish are nearly identical in size and growth.

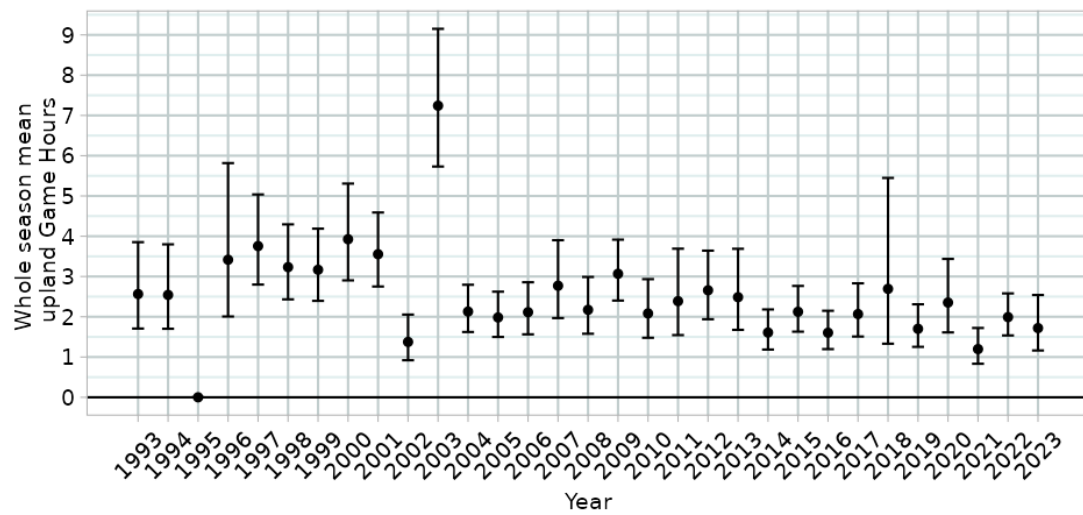
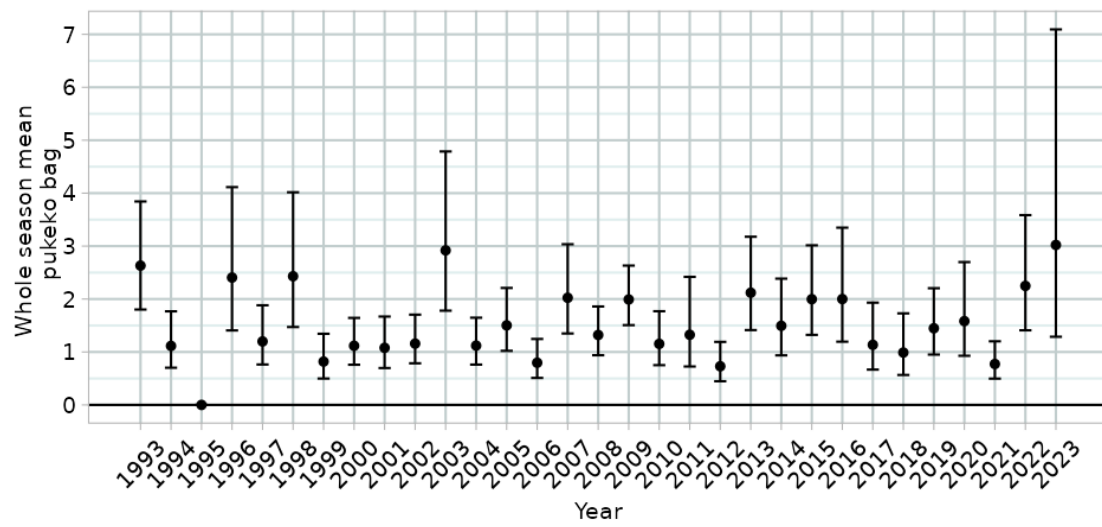
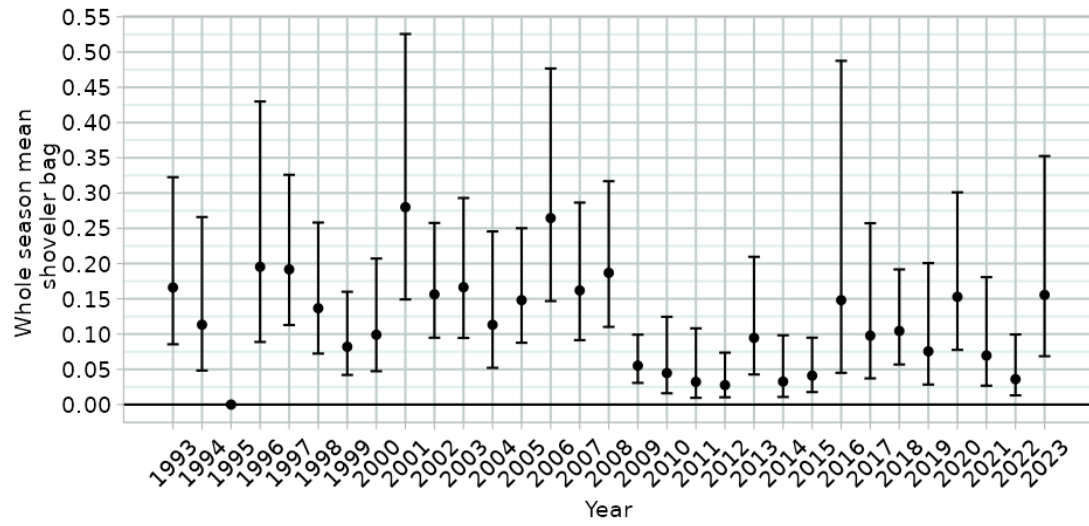
Some very unique wild tags have been reported including a fish that travelled from Toa Bridge to a small stream in Whatawhata that had no previous reports of trout.

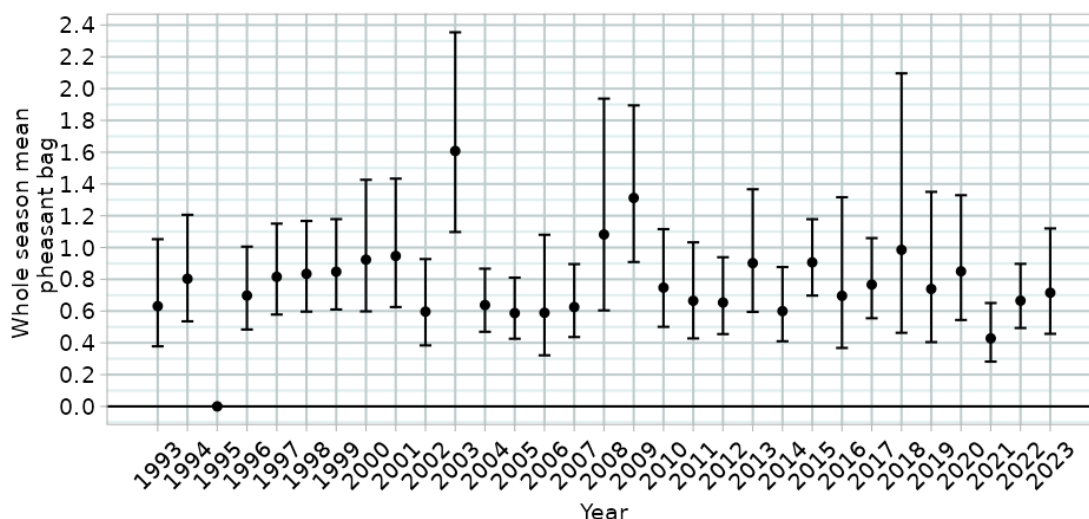
Project 1122: Gamebird Harvest Surveys

2023 Game Bird Harvest: Final graphs from the 2023 game harvest surveys are given below. Graphs are depicting averages per hunter for the entire season. Total hours waterfowl was again at the lower end of the scale despite most hunters indicating that there were more mallard and grey ducks in their hunting area this year. As discussed at previous meetings, hunter effort (hours waterfowl hunting) has generally decreased nationally and appears to be largely independent of regulations (SL and bag limits) and population levels. The game committee is working towards a template for presenting a national game harvest survey report in a similar way that information has been presented for indigenous game birds as part of the parliamentary petition.









OUTPUT 2: HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

Project 1211 RMA

Propose Waikato Regional Coastal Plan: We made a comprehensive submission on the Proposed Waikato Regional Coastal Plan. The plan regulates activities within the Coastal Marine Area (CMA), which includes the part of a river either a distance five times the width of the mouth of the river or one kilometre upstream of the river mouth, whichever is the lesser, as well as the foreshore. As such, the plan directly affects sports fish and gamebird habitat, the interests of hunters and anglers, as well as operational matters for Auckland Waikato Fish and Game. Due to recent changes to the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater, wetlands in the CMA are no longer captured by the regulations and as such it is important that the plan strikes the right balance in its policies and rules so that it provides for both protection, and sensible use of wetlands and sensitive coastal ecosystems alike. We raised concerns in our submission that the plan fails to provide rules that enable beneficial habitat restoration activities as permitted activities (meaning without resource consent), including those in wetlands, except for where it involves planting indigenous species. Of further concern is that if exotic plants are deemed pest species, then a resource consent is required for their removal unless the activity is done by a specified authority. These rules create an impediment to restoration and maintenance work carried out to protect habitats. On the flipside however, we also raised concerns that the permitted activity rules that relate to flood protection and maintenance dredging, do not provide enough protection against adverse effects of those activities. We also raised concerns that several of the objectives and policies in the water quality chapter of the plan fail to meet the requirements of the NPS-FW. Whilst we support the trigger levels/limits proposed, they fail to match up with the Healthy Rivers Plan Change 1 ("PC1"). Several policies and rules plan relate to controls on buildings and structures which affect maimai used for hunting which we also made specific submission points on.

NES- wetlands amendments: Mischa is continuing to work with Eben Herbet from the Eastern Region to develop a proposal to amend the NES-F to better enable wetland restoration activities as well as provide for the ability to build maimai, boardwalks and signs

within wetlands without a resource consent. Generally, Fish and Game support the policy intent of the NES-F to restore and protect wetlands, however what we are now seeing are many instances where resource consents are being required for restoration works where previously they had not. Councils are applying a strict interpretation of the regulations and seeking vegetation assessments, ecological reports, and detailed plans with applications which involve significant additional time and costs, making it harder to restore wetlands. The NES-F should have made it easier to create, restore and maintain wetlands however in its application it has made it more difficult, more expensive and more landowners are now not interested in doing this work. We will also be looking to amend the definition of “natural inland wetland” to provide better clarity on what is and isn’t a wetland as captured by the regulations.

Te kopuka discussion document / strategy submission March 2024: We had a meeting with Alan Stancliff to discuss the draft Te Heke Ngahuru Ki Te Awa Tupua discussion document regarding the Whanganui River. Alan is the Fish and Game representative on the Te Kopuka stakeholder group. In March 2017 legislation was passed in Parliament establishing a unique legal status for the Whanganui River, that of Te Awa Tupua. Spanning 290 km, Te Awa Tupua is the third longest river (longest navigable river) in Aotearoa. The discussion document sets a path for developing a strategy on how to best protect the Whanganui River going forward. We made the point at the meeting that this strategy should follow the lead of what was set by Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River – being high level with timeframes of what is to be achieved and by when. Keeping in mind that it is an aspirational document, with an iwi led Kaupapa. While the document cannot enforce landuse changes, it can direct council to look at water quality in the same way the Vision & Strategy has done. Consultation closes on this in March 2024.

Max Birt and Lumbercorp consents, Te Kauwhata: This is one we are glad to have off the books after around 8 years of involvement. We presented a statement to the hearing committee generally supporting the council S42A assessment and proposed conditions. There has been a lot of progress made at the sites and developing agreed conditions between submitters, the council and applicants. In the end, the only significant outstanding issue related to term of consent with the council proposing 25 years and the applicants seeking the maximum 35 years.

We supported the 25-year term due to the time that has elapsed since the previous consents expired, the uncertainty surrounding the management of consent exceedances in the future, and potential technological advancements in treatment processes over that time. In our experience it is rare that consent terms are granted for the maximum 35-year duration permitted under the RMA. Most recently we did not oppose the Waipa District Council in its application for a 35-year consent for the Cambridge WWTP. This was largely due to very stringent review conditions proffered in that case including a full assessment of BPO every 10 years and a subsequent requirement to implement BPO.

Whilst the MB and LUC applications do attempt to provide for continuous improvement there is still some uncertainty of outcome. For example, there had been recent exceedances of proposed limits and despite considerable effort to work through the

proposed condition framework to determine how these exceedances could be mitigated, the exact causes, and how they could be addressed were not always clear. Compliance issues may be further complicated by the complex nature of the ground and surface water interactions at the sites, and it remains unclear if these can ever be fully overcome.

Healthy Rivers, Plan Change 1: David gave expert evidence at the point source hearing for PC1 in Auckland and subsequently both Adam and David provided expert evidence for the diffuse hearing. The presentation of our case went well, with the judge and commissioners asking several questions especially in relation to lakes. This plan change has been a very labour-intensive process, and we have spent hundreds of hours preparing for and sitting through the environment court hearing alone. Our lawyer, Sarah Ongley, will be presenting a final submission in the Auckland Environment Court in December.

Opuatia Wetland Hydrological Restoration: David met with representatives from DOC and Regional Council (ICM) to discuss the hydrological restoration of the lower Opuatia Wetland. As mentioned in the previous report, ICM have a consent requiring restoration of water levels to the around 100ha of mineralised wetland. This project was required to be implemented to mitigate the direct loss of around 60ha of minerotrophic wetland through the construction of the Mercer West flood protection scheme. The restoration plan, which outlines how hydrological restoration is to be achieved, mandated the creation and maintenance of a stopbank at a uniform height of 5.0 RL adjacent to the Opuatia River to maintain wetland hydrology. A partial stop bank was built circa 2005 however it was never keyed in and was made of permeable material. Subsequently, it also appears significant slumping has occurred. It appears that the project has never been implemented and maintained as per the criteria captured in the plan. ICM are reviewing the information and will provide us with an update soon.

Temple View Ponds Lake Koromatua: David provided feedback on an options assessment for restoring the old oxidation ponds that sit upstream of Lake Koromatua.

Whangamarino Weir Section 128 Review: The draft technical and planning assessments have been circulated and David will prepare a verbal update at the meeting and answer any questions.

Project 1221: Council Land

Te Aroha Wetland: David met with contractors and representatives of the Te Aroha F&G association to go over planned restoration initiatives which will be implemented this summer. Works are planned for the start of December and will involve weir reconstruction and repacking culverts which are currently facilitating significant water loss due to subsurface flows. We will also be filing in low points in the track and MPDC have provided funding for track maintenance.

Williamson Wetland: New signs for the wetland have been ordered and should be up before the next meeting.

Clare, Roslyn, John and a number of our Councillors and volunteers have been helping with the proposed summer work programme notification now required annually as part of our consent for works inside a wetland, (this summer in the Central Shepherd, Cocks, Williamson, Aka Aka, Dean, McKenzie and Piggott Wetlands). Principal work is fixing up ruts and slumpage in stopbanks.

Dean Wetland: 6 clumps of yellow flowered Mexican Water Lily, (*Nuphar mexicana*), were sprayed in Dean Wetland Ponds 13 and 14 and their interconnecting canal. This is a very persistent weed that almost took over pond 13 in just a few years and it should not be ignored. If it gets away under the willows inside this wetland, it will require a major effort to control it.

OUTPUT 3: PARTICIPATION

Project 1311: Access negotiation

Lake Arapuni Access: Due to an Iwi led project to install a waka ama launching site and cultural site next to the existing boat ramp just below Waipapa Dam a bar gate has been installed blocking public access. The project is located on public land and has been funded by Mercury Energy. The gate blocks access to the river side of the Waipapa Reserve, the upper Arapuni Boat Ramp and the access track to the Mangawhio Stream. There is no parking at the gate to walk into the Mangawhio Stream or the boat ramp. The upper Arapuni Boat Ramp is 22 km upstream from the nearest public boat ramp at Arapuni Landing. Adam has asked for an access agreement that will allow F&G to check out keys to the gate and that the gate is relocated to make it safe for parking vehicles off the road.

Waihou River Access: Blue Spring / Te Waihou Walkway on the upper Waihou River is now closed due to a slip on the Leslie Road end of the track and traffic safety issues. The lack of Access from Leslie Road has caused significant congestion on the Whites Road (downstream) end of the track resulting in a temporary closure of the walking track. The track is not scheduled to be open again until November of 2024.

Fish & Game were not consulted about the track closure and have enquired about the legality of walking up the river to fish with both DOC and the District Council. The parking area at Whites Road will remain open and only the track is closed so technically it is legal to park and walk up the river as long as you stay off the track. Technically it is also legal to access the Waihou from the paper road on the West side of the Waihou.

Golden Clam: Biosecurity New Zealand have imposed a Controlled Area Notice (CAN) to prevent the spread of the gold clam into the Rotorua Lakes. All wake boats that have been in the mainstem of Waikato River below the Whakamaru Dam can not travel to other waters. Boats and trailers must be cleaned just prior to entering the water on the same day. Anglers are also required to fill in an Online self-certification form prior to launching. Up to date information on the gold clam can be found on the MPI web page.

Project 1331: F&G Newspapers

Adam is wrapping up the spring newsletter with the help of Ben and Roslyn.

One of the world authorities on mustelids, Dr Kim King works at Waikato University and has been very helpful with providing John with information that has been incorporated into trapping articles for our F&G website. This has been supplemented with info from the UK in various gamekeeping publications that John has privately imported that probably aren't otherwise available here.

The 23 Wildlife Refuges in our region have been described and mapped for our F&G website. An interesting discovery is that the Morrinsville Refuge at Waterworks Road was in the process of being revoked in Wildlife Service days, but this was being resisted by the then site managers. Despite consulting with all the current parties, it is far from clear what eventually happened. Our AAS Field Officer then, Dudley Bell, who wrote a report on it at the time, thinks this revocation was never done. If that is the case, then legally it probably still stands today as it needs a formal process by the Governor-General to undo the original proclamation.

Project 1361: User Group Costs

OUTPUT 4: PUBLIC INTERFACE

Project 1431 Liaison/Advocacy

Adam taught 51 children to fish on the Waitawheta River in conjunction with a school camp and conducted an electrofishing demonstration and lecture along with DOC cultural staff at Waikato Diocesan School for Girls. Adam gave a season opener talk to the Hamilton Anglers.

Horseshoe Lake: Adam will be assisting DOC to eradicate koi carp from Horseshoe Lake near the Hamilton Zoo.

New Zealand Secondary Schools Clay Target Championships: Fish and Game sponsor the North Island and New Zealand Secondary Schools Clay Target Championships. John was asked to attend the event held this year at the Waikato Clay Target Club to present the prizes on the final day. F&G branding is displayed very prominently on the events programme and the feedback about F&G's support was very positive indeed. Two handsome shields made from swamp-kauri are annually competed for. These were historically created by Rudi Hoetjes, Northland F&G's past manager, and were presented by John on the day. Several hundred young shooters plus all their parents, caregivers, coaches and etc attended.

John attended the Papakura funeral for David Syme, one of our stalwarts of old. At least 14 F&G folk were there as well as David's family and many friends from his other interests. Dave played a key role in keeping the Karaka Inlet open for gamebird hunting and his building skills can still be seen at one of the junior ponds.

Sika Show: David did a day at the F&G stall at the Sika Show alongside Corina Jordan, Richie Cosgrove, John Meikle and Maggie Tait. The show was well attended with lots of familiar faces from our hunting and fishing fraternity.

OUTPUT 5: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Project 1521 Ranger Training

Adam and John ran a ranger training day to complete the training of our new rangers. The rangers will now need to go into the field for practical training when time allows.

OUTPUT 8: PLANNING REPORTING

Project 1841 National Liaison

Adam continues to work on the gold clam, Maritime NZ, and trout habitat mapping at a national level.

OUTPUT 9: ADMINISTRATION

Project 1912: Administration

Maritime

Adam is still spending a considerable amount of time responding to the Maritime NZ audits. A new review of the industry skippers ticket is underway and it will likely take up to a week to respond to

B. Wilson
Chief Executive