

**NORTHLAND FISH & GAME COUNCIL**  
**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF A MEETING**  
**HELD AT THE NORTHLAND FISH & GAME OFFICE**  
**NELL PLACE, WHANGAREI**  
**7.00PM FRIDAY 13<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

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**PRESENT:**

**Chairman:** Phil Durham

**Councillors:** Cameron Shanks, John Skeates, Russell Daniels, John McEntee, Mark Bell

**Staff:** Craig Deaf (Manager), Rachael Quin (Administrator)

**Conservation Board:** Penny Smart (via teleconference)  
**Member of the Public:** Kelvin Ellis, Rudi Hoetjes

The Chairman welcomed the councillors and members of the public. The Conflict-of-Interest register was circulated around the table for all councillors to sign and declare any conflicts.

**APOLOGIES:** Darryl Reardon, Noel Birchall

The Chairman thanked staff for their effort and credited councillors for making his job easier. Cr Reardon and Cr Shanks were thanked for their years of service.

**Adoption of the Performance Report 2022-23**

**It was resolved:** *That the Council adopts the Audited Performance Report of the Northland Fish & Game council for the year ended 31 August 2023.*

*Cameron Shanks / Russell Daniels* *CARRIED*

The chair presented the Performance Report to the public.

**Previous Minutes**

**It was resolved:** *That the minutes of the meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023 are confirmed as true and correct.*

*John Skeates / John McEntee* *CARRIED*

**Matters Arising**

**Sports Fish Legal Definitions**

Manager advised there has been no progress on freshwater fish passage by Northland Regional Council as work on the Freshwater Plan change has taken priority.

### **Councillor Vacancy**

Northland Fish & Game Council placed a Public Notice in the local papers advising the public of a councillor vacancy on the Northland Fish & Game Council. No submissions were received therefore a by-election is not required. The council received one application to stand for the Northland Fish & Game Council. The chairman welcomed Mr Ellis.

**It was moved:**            ***That the Northland Fish & Game Council appoints Kelvin Ellis to the Northland Fish & Game Council.***

***Cameron Shanks/Mark Bell***

***CARRIED***

### **Managers' Report**

#### **1221 Jack Bisset Wetlands**

The manager advised that there has been no backlash from stand audits and condemned stands. There may be an opportunity for affected stand holders to utilise an excavator for demolition while it is contracted for other work. The manager will contact stand holders.

#### **1225 Flaxmill Wetlands**

Some slumping of the bund wall has water flowing over it in high water events and will need building up. A quote was received to build up 500m of wall between the slumping and the wetland outlet. The manager advised that the outlet is still functioning and the intention is to avoid the cost of building up the entire bund wall length.

#### **1226.1 Underwood Wetland**

The manager advised there had been good interest in ballot for opening weekend 2024. Planning is underway to host an open day to showcase the completed second stage of the wetland on World Wetlands Day 2024. Save the date posts have been sent and an invitation is to follow.

#### **1421 District and Regional Councils**

**Action:** The manager to contact other council staff regarding the Hikurangi Repo Project.

#### **1422 World Wetlands Day**

**Action:** The manager tabled the invitee list and will email to councillors for suggestions.

#### **1830 Reporting/Audit**

**Action:** Otago region Annual Report to be emailed to Cr Shanks and Cr Bell for their interest.

#### **1840 National Liaison**

The manager advised that regional managers and NZ Council have considered options with the two magazines to reduce costs after a major sponsor has withdrawn their advertising.

National staff are looking into advertising opportunities to keep production of the magazine viable.

The manager is in the process of joining the retail fuel and vehicle All of Government contracts. Costs savings for fuel against the current contract are difficult to determine however Fish and Game Councils are expected to participate in All of Government procurement where it is available.

### **Field Officers Reports**

#### **1220 Works and Management Wetland Summary**

The manager advised that Underwood Wetland spraying of rice grass has been carried out. It was explained that continual spraying is necessary until the rhizomes are exhausted. The manager commented that the now regular bittern sightings were considered an indicator of wetland health.

#### **1842 Maritime/Moss**

The manager clarified that the warning regarding substandard reporting was a criticism organisation wide and the Northland vessel 'Gamekeeper' was not part of that audit.

It was moved: ***That the Managers and Field Officers' reports be received.***

***Russell Daniels / John Skeates***

***CARRIED***

### **NZFGC Update**

A summary of decisions from the recent NZ Council meeting was supplied by Corina Jordan. The manager highlighted the main points from the summary. Lynda Topp has been appointed as First Patron of Fish and Game New Zealand and will be invited to the wetland event in February.

### **Performance Management Policy**

The chairman pointed out that Central South Island regional C.E. did not submit to council due to the belief it was not a governance topic. The chair stated he will raise the issue of who decides governance at the next chair zoom meeting.

### **Governance Training**

Cr Skeates stated the recent governance training online was good and considered Northland Fish & Game Council is doing very well. Councillors are encouraged to undergo the training but it is understood the standing times are not convenient. Cr Skeates suggested meetings could begin with setting out of points to achieve. The manager offered to trial this at the next meeting.

### **Hunter Survey Results**

Hunter survey results for the 2023 game season were discussed and compared against historical data from previous seasons. 2023 season followed an normal trend in harvest for

all game species. The chairman suggested an overlay of wet/dry weather with harvest results to show any correlation.

Cr Skeates suggested that harvest data should be collected for the special paradise duck season and added to the results.

Results from the national shoveler survey indicate a decline in the South Island but stasis in Northland.

### **Game Bird Season Recommendations for 2024 Game Season**

A summary of analysis for the Northland region of the NZ Game Bird Harvest Survey for all game bird species taken in the 2023 open game season was written by Field Officer Graham Gallagher for the Council's information. The councillors discussed the shoveler population and popularity for hunters and why the Special Paradise Week is in February. The following draft Game Gazette notice for the 2024 season was presented for the Councils approval:

#### **NORTHLAND FISH AND GAME REGION<sup>1</sup>**

##### **1 Game That May Be Hunted or Killed—Duration of the 2024/2025 Season**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Season Duration (dates inclusive)</b>	<b>Daily Bag Limit</b>
Grey/mallard duck and any hybrid of that species	4 May to 30 June 2024	12
NZ shoveler duck	4 May to 30 June 2024	3
Paradise shelduck	4 May to 28 July 2024	20
	15 Feb 2025 to 23 Feb 2025	20
Black swan	4 May to 28 July 2024	20
	15 Feb 2025 to 23 Feb 2025	20
Pukeko	4 May to 25 Aug 2024	12
	15 Feb 2025 to 23 Feb 2025	12
California quail	4 May to 25 Aug 2024	10
Brown quail	4 May to 25 Aug 2024	10
Cock pheasant	4 May to 25 Aug 2024	5

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<sup>1</sup> Reference to description: *New Zealand Gazette*, 24 May 1990, No. 83, page 1861.

## 2 Shooting Hours

(1) 6.30am to 6.30pm, except the hunting of:

- (a) Paradise shelduck, pukeko and black swan on 15 Feb 2025 to 23 Feb 2025 will be from 6.30am to 8.00pm.

## 3 Decoy Limit

No limit.

## 4 Special Conditions

- (1) No person shall wilfully leave on the hunting ground any game bird(s) shot or parts of any game bird(s) shot.
- (2) Camouflaged Rowboats: Persons may hunt or kill game from an unmoored camouflaged rowboat.
- (3) During the 15 Feb 2025 to 23 Feb 2025 special open season, no person shall hunt within 300 metres of any urban sewage oxidation ponds.
- (4) Any licensed game bird hunter who has a Department of Conservation permit to take or kill wildlife for the purpose of hawking may hunt with an Australasian Harrier (*Circus approximans*) to take game birds. This is subject to the season length and bag limit for each game bird species in clause 1 of this notice and any other special conditions for the Northland Fish and Game region and also subject to any conditions imposed by the Director-General of Conservation under such a permit.

The Council made the following resolution:

*It was moved:*            **The Council adopts the 2024 game bird season recommendation but retains the shoveler limit at 3.**

**Cameron Shanks / Mark Bell**

**CARRIED**

## **Organisational Strategy**

NZ Council have refined the organisational strategy and presented it to the regions. Council discussed that it makes sense to adopt the national strategy to support the national effort and to unify effort nationally.

*It was moved:*            **That the Fish & Game Council Organisational Strategy is endorsed by Northland Fish & Game Council.**

**John McEntee / Cameron Shanks**

**CARRIED**



It was moved: *That the Financial Report is adopted.*

*Mark Bell / John McEntee*

*CARRIED*

### Memoranda

#### Trout Release

Options for 2024 liberations were discussed with a suggestion that less are purchased for liberation into the three dams.

Action: Manager to find out if the total number of fingerlings ordered from the hatchery can be reduced.

#### Boat Sounder

In order to comply with MTOP it was agreed that it was necessary to purchase a boat sounder with GPS and quality underwater imaging. Wholesale discount quote supplied was the most competitive.

It was moved: *That the approval is given to purchase an appropriate boat sounder up to \$2000 from the Non-Resident reserve funds.*

*Russell Daniels / John Skeates*

*CARRIED*

### General Business

Manager circulated the updated council meeting dates for 2024 advising that councillors would receive a copy with the January 2024 agenda.

Action: Email chairman a copy of meeting dates.

Cr Daniels expressed interest in carrying out a competition for largest trout of season. The manager advised that is a good idea for next season.

Rudi Hoetjes presented drone footage of the Underwood wetland and offered to provide Fish & Game with the footage.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.26pm.

*Phil Durham*  
Chairman



