

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF

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

Matters arising from the Council Meeting of 15th June 2019

- A letter was tabled from Mr Doug Emmett recommending to Council that the wetland at Evans Road be named after the incumbent Auckland/Waikato Chairman, Murray Young, in recognition of all the time, effort and personal expense Mr Young has selfishly donated over such a long period of time. Councillors agreed that the wetland at Evans Road be named the Murray Young Wetland.
- Mr Klee and Mr Wilson provided an update of their recent meeting with the Auckland Airport Authority concerning swan in Manukau Harbour. The Authority would soon be carrying out a tracking survey involving some 40 satellite tags to monitor the movements of swan from Manukau Harbour to elsewhere. The Authority was made aware of our concerns, and there was full agreement to work closely with Fish & Game on the swan issue at Auckland Airport.
- Mr Klee and Councillor Juby informed the meeting of the issues with the discharge from Lake Otamangakau into the Whanganui River headwaters.
- Concern was expressed over Hauraki Rail Trail locking the gate that provides access for duck hunters to the lower Piako River. Mr Klee stated that he was working through the issues with the regional council and Hauraki Rail Trail. He had negotiated an agreement where the affected hunters would be issued with keys to the gate.
- The proposed National Policy on Prosecution was discussed by Councillors. It was agreed that the proposed National Policy on Prosecutions be approved.
- Mr Wilson introduced the 2019/2020 Budget and Operational Work Plan, noting that due to the increasing cost of office maintenance he was looking at the option of moving the office to a building that would require lower maintenance. The proposed budget of \$826,188 and Operational Work Plan was approved.
- The report on the 2019/2020 District Anglers Notice and recommendations by Dr Daniel were discussed.
 - It was agreed that the one rod rule be maintained.
 - It was agreed that the lower Kaniwhaniwha Stream below Smith Road be open to spin fishing.
 - The recommendation that the catch limit for all small rivers and Lake Moana-nui be lowered to two trout was discussed. It was agreed that more consultation on this recommendation was required with licence holders.
 - It was agreed that the decision to move or remove the no trolling sign in the upper reaches of Lake Karapiro is delayed until after further consultation with licence holders.
- Councillor Avery updated the meeting on Department of Conservation's proposed charges for duck huts in the Flax Block. Councillors expressed their shock at size of the fees which could be over \$3,000 per year despite the seasonal use of the huts. It was agreed that hunters were being targeted by DoC and that the fees were excessive. Mr Klee noted that he had raised the issue of DoC huts fees at a national level.

Matters arising from the Chief Executive's Report

- **Hunter Surveys:** The fog that blanketed the Waikato for the first 4 days of the hunting season made it challenging for many, especially combined with the lack of wind. Most hunters didn't see the sun or any birds more than 80m away until well into the afternoon on both days of opening weekend. On top of the fog, the prolonged dry also meant that several key hunting areas in wetlands and swamps such as the Whangamarino and Kopuatai were dry. Some guys stuck it out, but the results were very mixed. The fog helped those that had ducks returning to where they wanted be, but those hunters trying to pull ducks off flight lines found it very difficult. Preliminary results from the Game Bird Hunter Survey indicate that average effort (hours hunted) was a bit lower than in previous years as were the number of ducks per hunter. The feedback we received suggests that many hunters just found conditions too frustrating and pulled the plug early, especially on the Sunday due to a lack of bird movement in their area. Despite the challenging conditions the average of 0.54 ducks per hunter per hour is about average in recent years and markedly better than 2015.

- Table 1, *Average hours and number of grallards shot per hunter on opening weekend of the gamebird season for the last 5 years.*

Year	Hours	Grallard Harvest	Ducks per hour
2015	12.1	5.3	0.44
2016	11.3	6.4	0.57
2017	12	6.1	0.51
2018	11.7	6.6	0.56
2019	10.4	5.6	0.54

- **Sterile Trout:** Dr Adam Daniel has been setting up the sterile trout project by sourcing the equipment and preparing for the June spawning and pressure treatment. Trout for next year were ordered and then the order was adjusted to account for increased prices.
- **Lake Pupuke:** The annual release was held during school holidays with 1,200 large trout liberated, mainly large rainbow trout but also at least 100 brook char and brown trout.
- **Waikato District Plan: Further submissions:** We reviewed the approximately 1,000 submissions made on the Waikato District Plan and made further submissions where appropriate. The main concern was those submitters seeking zoning changes to rural land next to wetlands and lakes.
- **Healthy Rivers Plan Change 1 update:** We have so far presented evidence on two occasions to the the Hearings on the Healthy Rivers Plan Change. We presented evidence on ecosystem health requirements (Dr. Adam Canning), fishery requirements (Dr Adam Daniel), wetlands, shallow lakes and gamebird requirement (David Klee), and the planning framework required to accommodate these matters (Helen Marr).
- **Fonterra Consents:** We met with representatives from Fonterra to discuss the renewal of consents for the Te Rapa Dairy Factory. We have been sent draft conditions that we will be looking at in detail over the next month. The consents for the Te Awamutu Fonterra factory have recently been granted. We're reasonably happy with the outcome which includes at our request "a total of \$80,000 over 5 years towards new or existing environmental enhancement projects". Fonterra will also be constructing cooling towers to partially reduce the heat content of their discharge, which was also a concern.
- **WCEET Funding Applications:** We received funding for both WCEET applications lodged for the latest funding round, totalling \$51,000. The projects include the construction, fencing and planting of 4 wetlands on private land. The projects have excellent support from other stakeholders such as WRC who are contributing towards the costs and helping with logistical support.