

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF

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

Matters arising from the Council Meeting of 10th June 2023

1. **Duck Strategy:** Councillor Williamson requested that the preparation of a Duck Strategy be placed on the agenda at the next meeting of Council.
2. **Sterile trout releases:** Dr Daniel updated Councillors on the sterile trout programme in Lake Arapuni. He emphasised that no further releases of sterile trout were currently planned but that monitoring would continue for several years. Initial results indicate that catch rates of sterile trout were only 50% that of non-sterile fish and there was so far no evidence of longer life or greater maximum size.
3. **Golden Clam:** Dr Daniel provided an update on the Golden Clam intrusion. He highlighted the potential role of wake boats in spreading this invasive shellfish from overseas waters to Lake Karapiro, and from Lake Karapiro to other waters in New Zealand. Dr Daniel will be Fish and Game's representative on the Technical Advisory Group set up to advise on the national response to the Golden Clam incursion.
4. **Botulism Outbreaks:** Mr Klee gave a PowerPoint presentation on recent botulism outbreaks in the Waikato. He believed that botulism outbreaks on ponds in wastewater treatment plants were generally well controlled after the adoption of botulism management plans by district councils and the employment of contractors to disperse birds and appropriately manage initial outbreaks – both Fish and Game initiatives coordinated by Mr Klee. However, Mr Klee warned that botulism outbreaks in the natural environment were much more difficult to manage but that progress was being made with a botulism management plan in place for the Hauraki Plains. The emphasis was on minimising the environmental conditions required for a major outbreak by reducing water temperatures and maintaining flow. However, there was still much to be done.
5. **NZ Council:** It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Chairman of the NZC requesting that both the agenda and draft minutes of NZ Council meetings be available to regional councils within 2 weeks of the meeting.
6. **Regional mergers:** A letter was tabled from Alan Strong, Chairman North Canterbury Fish & Game, recommending that F&G councils discussed the concept of adjacent regions developing an MOU rather than considering mergers. It was agreed that Council supports the concept of an MOU between adjacent Fish & Game regions.
7. **Licence fees:** The recommendation from the NZ Council for licence fees for the 2023/24 season were accepted.
8. **Draft National Reserves Policy:** The draft National Reserves Policy was accepted with the following recommendations:
 - That the Asset Replacement Fund is reviewed with consideration given that it only applies to assets valued at more than \$5,000.
 - That general reserves for regions should be maintained at 30% of budget.
9. **Draft Remuneration Policy:** The national draft Remuneration Policy was tabled. It was agreed that the concerns expressed by Councillors over the draft policy would be conveyed to the NZ Council.

Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report

Drift Diving: The Waitawheta River and Mangatutu Stream drift dives were completed in March. Both streams had reduced numbers of fish likely due to the abnormally cool water temperatures allowing fish to occupy lower elevation habitat.

Trout releases: The first of three Lake Pupuke/Quarry Lake fish releases was completed just after Easter for the school Holidays. Parkinson's Lake fish release was carried out on May 17

Waikato District Plan appeals: Ward Group has withdrawn their appeal requesting the rezoning of rural land north of Meremere and adjacent to the North Shepherd Wetland. We opposed this appeal.

Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan: We made a submission on the Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan which is one of the key actions in Revitalising the Gulf. We emphasised in our submission on the Fisheries Plan that an integrated approach is required that considers catchment discharges originating inland of the coastal marine area. As such the Fisheries Plan needs greater recognition of the interactions between freshwater, catchment-based land-use activities, and the coastal environment.

Hauraki Coromandel Catchment review and workshop: Clare Robertson attended the Hauraki Coromandel Catchment review and workshop in May. There was a consensus from the group that the emphasis should be on the naturalisation of river and streams in both the Hauraki and Coromandel districts.

Glenenergy Solar Farm: We provided feedback on a proposal by Glenenergy to establish an Energy Farm on the shores of Lake Whangape.

PF Olsen FSC Audit: We were contacted by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) auditing group, about the forestry company PF Olsen. While Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game do not currently have any access arrangements to PF Olsen managed forests, we consider that they should be providing public access, especially for gamebird hunters, as part of their obligations to the wider community as good corporate citizens.

Lumbercorp and Max Birt: We submitted on both Lumbercorp and Max Birt's consent applications for the discharge of treated stormwater.

Healthy Rivers: Mediation is now completed. Mr Klee and Dr Daniel are currently writing evidence for the Hearing in the Environment Court.

Consents for F&G wetlands: There is now a requirement to complete a Restoration Plan for natural inland wetlands which Clare Robertson has been working on for each of Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Council wetlands. These restoration plans were completed and sent to the Waikato Regional Council on the 22nd of May, and we are waiting for a response.

Facebook: Adam and Roslyn have now released short videos on the Awakino drift dive, Waitawheta drift dive, Quarry Lake fish release and Lake Arapuni fishing comp.

Maimai disputes: We provided advice and arbitration on the usual maimai disputes that occur every year with some hunters losing maimai which have been *in the family for generations*. There is nothing in the Wildlife Act which allows us to intervene on compassionate grounds, so the takeaway lessons here are: mark up early if it is last year's spot, use an adult tag, and put some serious protection around that paper tag. And take lots of photos!