

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 25 May 2026

Mobility Maimai: Councillor Smith asked for an update regarding the mobility maimai initiative. The Chief Executive advised that the wheelchair bound hunter who recently utilised the maimai had been very appreciative of the opportunity and had thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Compliance Activities: Council sought an update regarding compliance activities undertaken during the opening period of the game bird season and discussed both compliant and non-compliant behaviour encountered in the field. The Chief Executive advised that some targeted compliance activity had been undertaken in response to intelligence received regarding alleged offending.

Licence Sales Update: The Chief Executive provided an update on current licence sales figures and advised that Auckland Waikato Fish and Game was presently the only region in the country recording increases in both fish and game licence sales compared to the previous year.

Prosecution Summary Report: The Chief Executive explained the report and noted that moving forward, as part of the consolidated Annual Report and compliance as a core activity that Council is required to report on, this information would be included accordingly.

Establishing a controlled fishery on the upper whakapapa: The Chair outlined the history of the access issues within the catchment and noted that this could be one potential avenue to restore access. It was noted that this would be a novel use of a controlled fishery to facilitate access, however it appeared that the Department of Conservation was supportive of the approach.

Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Banding/Shoveler Study

The letter that is sent to hunters after they have reported a band has been updated with a link to a web map showing start and end locations.

Population Surveys

Pukeko Monitoring Pilot - Beau developed a monitoring programme for pukeko, which was piloted in April. Beau and Dani (with the help of Roslyn, Clare, and David) piloted this monitoring programme, surveying a number of transects distributed all over the region. This provides a baseline of data and was also a useful exercise in determining which were practical and should be retained and which should be discarded (e.g., due to safety, or lack of visibility). Overall counts were high, with only one site having zero and the max being 122.

Gamebird Research

Feedback on national gamebird research - David and Beau provided feedback on a research paper led by Matt Garrick examining how harvest expectations influence satisfaction.

Fish Releases

Dani and Beau completed the first fish release of the year, delivering 200 trout alive to Quarry Lake.

HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

RMA

Island Block Pump Station Replacement Consent Application - Update - Concerns were raised with the processing officer regarding the Island Block Road Pump Station Replacement, particularly around the application of the Waikato Regional Plan and the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES-F), and whether the upgraded scheme can rely on permitted activity status given changes to the system's configuration, discharge volumes, and effects on the wetland. We consider the activity may require consent as a discretionary or restricted discretionary activity. Despite these concerns and the request to pause the process, the consent has now been granted.

Submission opposing the Enviro NZ Hampton Downs Landfill consent - Clare submitted on behalf of Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game (AWFG) opposing the Enviro NZ Hampton Downs Landfill consent, raising concerns about the adequacy of the Assessment of Environmental Effects and proposed consent conditions.

Update – Healthy Rivers Plan Change 1 - Following the Environment Court's second Interim Decision on Plan Change 1, Fish and Game considered its response to the Court's direction on section 70 matters. While the option of directly challenging the Court's analysis was considered, staff progressed a more measured response (Option B), consistent with Council direction and the criteria outlined at the previous meeting.

Council Land

Summer works have wrapped up, though a very short maintenance window this year with conditions not being dry enough until late February to begin any digger works. With only a 5-week window, and along with the normal budget constraints we couldn't get all the work completed that is needed.

Council Wetlands on the works list for next summer are Piggott, Blythen and Aka aka, who weren't able to get any works completed this summer.

Following on from last year Dani has continued to work with WRC and DoC pest plant/biosecurity teams around some of the weed species we have present on our wetlands, particularly around Cuscuta/golden dodder which is present on all four of our wetlands in the Whangamarino.

Pond holder Maintenance Logs - Our pondholders have now been using the QR code method of recording their works on our wetland to cover health and safety by making sure everyone has read through the risk management matrix and reminds them to notify someone where they are going.

PARTICIPATION

Access Negotiation

Fishing Access - A member of the public requested clarification about fishing access to the Moakurua River, as they were confused about the information on the Fishing Access Map. To clarify some of the details, Beau submitted an OIA to the OIO and WAMS. They responded and included suggestions for descriptions for the access points. When the whole OIA request is published online, we will update the Access Map with additional information, including a link to their response.

Angler Access Fund - The Stone Jug Road access project has now been successfully completed. Public angler access has been secured through legal easements registered on the title, ensuring permanent access to the fishery while enabling the underlying landholding to be sold.

Media

Mobility impaired accessible maimai - Staff have spent some time getting the newly constructed mobility impaired accessible maimai ready for hunting this season. We promoted the maimai on social media, as well as via organisations such as physios and disability advocacy groups.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Ranging

Between John and Adam 22 contacts were made with anglers at Pupuke and the Cambridge area. No citations were given.

ADMINISTRATION

OSH

Health and Safety - The team has been spending time setting up and learning the new health and safety system, GetHomeSafe. There are still a couple of things to work out, but it is looking very promising.