

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 July 2026

Access and Controlled Fishery: The Chair and Chief Executive updated Council on the official opening of the Stone Jug Road property, noting that the event had been a significant success. The Minister was highly complementary of the initiative during his speech and acknowledged the innovative work being undertaken by the Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Council to secure long term public access to freshwater fisheries.

Hampton Downs Landfill: Hampton Downs Landfill: Councillor Williamson noted that odour issues associated with the Hampton Downs Landfill had, on occasions, affected nearby Fish and Game wetlands and queried whether the current resource consent application adequately addressed those effects.

Lake Karapiro Fishing Competition: The Chair and Mr Osborne updated Council on the recent children's fishing competition held at Lake Rotoroa, Hamilton. The event attracted 180 registered participants, demonstrating the strong public interest in family fishing events. However, catch rates were low, with only seven fish landed during the competition.

Financial Report: The Chair and Chief Executive presented the financial report, noting that licence sales continued to track strongly within the Auckland/Waikato region despite national sales remaining below the previous year. Based on current trends, Auckland/Waikato was expected to be the only region to record year on year growth in both fish and game bird licence sales.

Lake Arapuni Triploid Trout: Mr Osborne presented a high-level summary of the report. The Chief Executive thanked Mr Osborne for the considerable time and effort he had invested in compiling, validating and cleaning the underlying data, noting that this had significantly improved the quality and reliability of the information presented to Council.

Mou With Eastern F&G Council: Council discussed the proposed Memorandum of Understanding with the Eastern Fish and Game Council and expressed its support for the initiative.

Merit Certificates: Councillor Annan noted that a number of longstanding Fish and Game Honorary Rangers were due to retire and suggested that Council consider recognising their contribution through the presentation of Merit Certificates.

Whakapapa Fishing Regulations: The Chief Executive and Chair updated Council on a discrepancy that had recently been identified between the Auckland/Waikato Sports Fishing Regulations booklet and the New Zealand Gazette in relation to the downstream Whakapapa River sports fishing season.

Council reaffirm its previous resolution setting the downstream Whakapapa River season from 1 October to 30 June, noting that this decision had already been made through the statutory regulation review process in 2025 and subsequently approved by the New Zealand Fish and Game Council. Council considered the current situation to be the result of a clerical or administrative error during publication rather than a new policy decision which unfortunately transferred through to this year's gazette.

A letter to be sent to request that the Gazette for the 2027 season be amended to accurately reflect Council's existing resolution and clarify that the downstream Whakapapa River was only gazetted as being open during the current season as a result of the apparent publication error.

Access Fund: Council noted that the rural property upstream of Toa Bridge, providing access to one of the premier trout fisheries within the Auckland/Waikato region, is currently on the market.

Discussion was held regarding the potential use of the dedicated non-resident reserve to support the acquisition of this property, or other strategically important properties that secure permanent public access to premier trout fisheries.

Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Fish Harvest Assessment

Matt has written the Lake Arapuni Sterile Trout (Triploid) Final Report Population Surveys. This can be viewed on the website.

Fish Harvest Survey

Lake Arapuni Spawning tributary monitoring

Matt and Beau undertook a scouting inspection of several Lake Arapuni Spawning tributaries on the 12th of June. Recent storm activity has impacted the catchment. There are large amounts of gravel and boulders waiting to come down. This means any immediate intervention to put in bed logs creating pools or slowing water, deepening habitat would be ineffective. The recovery will take time and more rain to flush and create a deeper channel.

Game Harvest Survey

Dani, Beau and Clare have been working on gamebird harvest surveys with the help of Dani's sister. As of now, we are up to survey period five of seven. General feedback on the longer season has been positive

Fish Releases

Matt and Bruno undertook trout liberations into Parkinsons Lake (150 fish) and Lake Whatihua (150 fish), the dune lakes to the west of Waiuku on 20th May. A liberation of 200 trout was undertaken into Lake Moananui (Tokoroa) on the 27th of May.

Regulation

The Anglers Notice recommendation of Status Quo for the Auckland/ Waikato Fish & Game Region Sports Fishing Regulations 2026-27 was sent through to NZC on the 2nd of June for Ministerial Approval.

Game Bird Control

Dani and Beau have issued a number of exemptions allowing landowners to use methods other than shotguns and to shoot nuisance game birds (mainly pukeko) while they are on the ground when it is unsafe to hunt them in flight. These exemptions require people to hold a valid game bird licence or qualify as an owner occupier under the Wildlife Act, and to comply with all other applicable game bird regulations.

HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

RMA

Crusader Meats Wastewater Discharge Consent (Horizons Region)

Bruno, Matt and Clare have been progressing AWFG's review of the updated consent conditions for the proposed discharge of treated wastewater to land from Crusader Meats within the Horizons Region. This consent process has been on hold since 2018, when Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game lodged a submission raising a number of concerns regarding the proposal.

Enviro NZ Hampton Downs Landfill consent application

Since the previous reporting period, a hearing date has been scheduled for the Enviro NZ Hampton Downs Landfill consent application. The proposal relates to the ongoing operation and development of the Hampton Downs Landfill, including associated stormwater management systems and constructed ponding/wetland areas within the site footprint.

Auckland Pest Management Plan – Early Engagement

Clare has been engaging with Auckland Council as part of early consultation on the review of the Auckland Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP), which is being updated with a view to a new plan being in place by 2030. This engagement follows Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game's previous submission on the "Let's Protect Our Environment" discussion document.

Council Land

Since the introduction of the Google Forms check in system and digital hazard register, the majority of wetland volunteer groups have adopted the process and are using it effectively. As a result, Check in/QR Code signs have been produced and are now being installed at each wetland to improve accessibility and encourage consistent use of the system. These are being put up as Dani completes audits and stocktake of all the wetlands. Dani is also working to prep for next summer's maintenance plan early before she goes on leave, to prepare as much of the budget and consent requirements as much as possible.

Whangamarino Weir Reconsenting

Bruno has been reviewing and collating any existing data that exists in relation to fish communities above and below the Whangamarino weir in preparation for the future reconsenting of this structure. Data from various sources including regional council, consultancy reports, university projects and the NZFFDB suggest that certain fish species such as inanga, smelt and grey mullet that could be impeded by such structures and making it past. Reasonable numbers of these species have been detected upstream across multiple data sources and in multiple localities from a variety of fishery techniques (e.g. netting, electrofishing and eDNA).

Non-Council Land

Dani and David have supported several landowners with applications to the Game Bird Habitat Trust (GBHT) for a number of small wetland restoration projects. One of these projects have already seen the removal of mature willows that were dominating stream habitats, along with works to improve water flow, tidy stream channels, and open up pond areas.

Dani is also preparing applications to the Fonterra and Landcare Trust for larger wetland restoration projects, including a project in Gordonton. These collaborative projects with Waikato RiverCare will also seek additional funding from the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust (WCEET) early next year.

Trees

Tree delivery took place slightly earlier this year following feedback from several groups last year requesting an earlier distribution to allow planting to begin sooner in the season.

PARTICIPATION

Access Negotiation

Physical Access Signs

Beau and Roslyn have found a new supplier for Angler Access signs. Previously, the ACM signs cost around \$120 each to print. A supplier in Auckland does something similar for \$18.60. This cost difference is a massive help in allowing us to expand the angler access signage in our region. Matt and Beau have identified key high-priority sites for signage (high use/quality and/or good legal access) and have installed 5 of these signs on some key Waikato Spring Creeks.

Gamebird Access Map

Beau has been working on a digital gamebird hunting access map to complement the existing fishing access map. The aim is to make it much easier for both new and experienced hunters to identify hunting opportunities across the Auckland/Waikato region.

User Group

Two School Events

Matt and Beau participated in two school events at Korahonui School and Maihihi School. Korahonui school had a maimai building competition which they were the judge and Maihihi school was a presentation around general hunting and fishing rules preparation for their annual hunting competition.

Lake Rotoroa (Hamilton Lake) Fishing Competition

Auckland Waikato Fish and Game are partnering with Whakamana ki Rotoroa and Hamilton Anglers Club with support from Burnsco to put on the Lake Rotoroa kids fishing competition 2026. This will be held on the 5th of July at Hamilton Lake.

Lake Karapiro Perch Pro

Auckland Waikato Fish and Game staff are planning to undertake a brief survey of lake Karapiro this winter to better understand the current situation with European perch and identify a few aggregation hot spot localities for a possible future Perch Pro competition in this lake.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Liaison Advocacy

Dani has been continuing to attend the Whangamarino Working Group meetings and workshops. Recently she attended a community night held by WRC in Te Kauwhata which was attended by over 100 members of the community and landowners. There was a lot of discussion which featured some opposition to aspects of the proposed Whangamarino Action Plan.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Compliance and Prosecutions

Clare has continued progressing compliance and enforcement matters arising from the 2026 Game Bird Season. This has included assessing offence files, issuing a number of written warnings where appropriate, and filing summonses with the District Court for matters considered suitable for prosecution and potential diversion.

ADMINISTRATION

OSH

Staff Training

Matt recertified as a GrowSafe Standard certified handler for agricultural spraying. Matt will be covering the spray storage area and agrichemical handling in Dani's upcoming leave.