



**EASTERN
FISH AND GAME COUNCIL**

***MEETING
AGENDA***

8 October 2026

AGENDA

The 224th Meeting of the Eastern Fish and Game Council

Venue: Eastern Fish & Game Region Offices
Paradise Valley Road
ROTORUA

Date: Thursday, 8 October 2026

Commences: 11 AM

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R = resolution required, D = for discussion/advice, I = for information only

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 223rd MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW ZEALAND AND VIA TEAMS ON THURSDAY 30 JULY 2026 AT 11.00 AM.

Present

Crs. Lindsay Lyons, Pat Swift, Mark Sceats, Alec McIver, Murray Ferris, Kevin Coutts, and Scott Nicol.

In attendance

Arash Alaeinia, Kate Thompson, Eben Herbert, Matt McDougall (Eastern Fish and Game); Barry Roderick.

1.0 WELCOME

1.1 Cr Lindsay Lyons opened the meeting at 11.00 and welcomed all present.

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 There were no apologies for the 223rd meeting of the Eastern Fish and Game Council.

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (28 MAY 2026)

3.1 *Agreed (Kevin Coutts/Alec McIver) that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th May 2026 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [26/05/3.1]*

3.2 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY

3.3 There were no items for inclusion in Council Policy.

3.4 MATTERS ARISING

3.4.1 Mark Sceats requested that Council revisit the management of hunting stands. Arash Alaeinia advised that staff are currently reviewing the process and requested that Mark email his concerns to himself and Matt McDougall for consideration as part of the review. Arash advised that he would look to include this review on the agenda for a future meeting.

3.5 MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING (25 JUNE 2026)

3.6 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Pat Swift) that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2026 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [26/07/3.6]*

3.7 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY

3.8 There were no items for inclusion in Council Policy.

3.9 MATTERS ARISING

3.9.1 Mark Sceats again raised his concerns about employment of staff and advised that he would raise the matter at a future time.

4.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

There were no items notified for general business.

5.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

5.1 Councillors were asked to inform the chair of any conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest were recorded.

6.0 HEALTH & SAFETY

6.1 Arash Alaeinia spoke to the Health & Safety report, noting the minor injury that had been reported, and asked whether Council had any questions. No questions were raised.

6.2 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that Council receives the Health and Safety report. [26/07/6.2]*

7.0 RE-CONFIRMATION 2026-2027 LICENCE FEE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Arash Alaeinia advised that this item was a reconfirmation of matters discussed at the June Extraordinary Council meeting, bringing the decisions made at that meeting to the full Council for reconfirmation. Council noted that the Minister had already approved the \$2 licence fee increase, which formed part of those decisions.
- 7.2 Kate Thompson queried whether Mark Sceats was aware if NZC had considered the resolution from the Extraordinary Council meeting which noted that Council acknowledged NZC may amend the reduction percentage based on final figures. Mark advised that he had not yet seen final figures and therefore this item would still be pending.
- 7.3 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Alec McIver) that Council reconfirms resolutions [26/06/5.13], [26/06/5.14], [26/06/5.15], [26/06/5.16], as recorded in the minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 25 June 2026. [26/07/7.3]*

8.0 LETTER TO MINISTER JAMES MEAGER

- 8.1 Cr Lindsay Lyons noted that the letter previously proposed to be sent to the Minister had been superseded by recent events. Council discussed whether a letter should now be sent.
- 8.2 Cr Kevin Coutts expressed strong concern that we should not be following Auckland Waikato in sending a letter to the Minister as it will just be a similar complaint. NZC is a part of F&G and will be here as it is in legislation, so just because we disagree with them, we should not be running to the Minister each time. We have to find ways to work together and communicate more.
- 8.3 Kevin continued to raise concern that if we continue to complain to the Minister because we cannot get on, then it highlights that our system is broken and can support the Minister in handing F&G to DOC and or iwi. Which both organisation would happily take us as they both want F&G.
- 8.4 Council considered that the primary issue was the breakdown in communication between the New Zealand Council (NZC) and its management and staff. It was noted that this Council has an NZC Council appointee who provides an appropriate governance pathway for raising concerns with NZC.
- 8.5 Cr Mark Sceats added that no one had raised issues with him as the NZC appointee and was enjoying seeing the letters to the Minister as it highlights the broken system of F&G. He himself had written a letter to the Minister April last year expressing his concerns that our budget system is broken and fiscally we are broken. He will be pushing for a complete restructure of the organisation, with licence sales declining, HPAI on the horizon we cannot continue this way.
- 8.6 Cr Lindsay Lyons stated that the primary issue with NZC has been the lack of communication in responding to emails and follow ups. He continued to state that there needs to be better engagement and communication between himself our NZC appointee. This was supported by Kevin who highlighted these two positions are the most important roles and they need to have more engagement with each other. Mark supported the idea and stated that he will take Eastern's Council's concerns back to NZC and in the future, if responses from NZC are not forthcoming to let him know and he will follow it up and raise to the National office.
- 8.7 Arash Alaeinia noted that there is general agreement that change is required, with aspects of the current governance structure no longer considered fit for purpose. He noted significant challenges ahead with declining licence sales and the organisation's ability to meet all of its responsibilities under the Conservation Act. Concern had been expressed among Regions regarding what was perceived to be an increasing appetite within NZC and its senior management for a more command-and-control approach. Arash noted that, if future reforms result in financial control being centralised through

- NZC, there is a concern that Regions could lose their ability to have meaningful input into decision-making. These concerns were reinforced by experiences over the past year regarding NZC management at both governance and operational levels, including shortcomings in communication, transparency, and the quality of information and work produced by NZC. It was noted that these issues did not give the Regions confidence that they would retain an appropriate level of influence following any future reforms.
- 8.8 Arash also noted that, while Mark had raised questions with NZC, there was concern that NZC may not always be receiving the full narrative from the Regions. The budget process was noted as an example where the information provided to NZC was not considered to fully reflect the information and position provided by the Regions. Council noted that the ongoing concerns regarding communication had been consistently raised and documented by Council and that this documentation itself provided a record of these concerns for NZC.
- 8.9 Cr Mark Sceats acknowledged that there were issues with communication and the quality of information provided, and noted that some information and issues also arose from regional inputs and the timing of updates.
- 8.10 It was reiterated that the Council's NZC appointee provides an appropriate avenue to raise these matters with NZC and seek further clarification and responses. Council suggested that the Chair, NZC Representative, and CEO should work more closely together as a channel for identifying, raising, and resolving issues. Cr Alec McIver asked that communications between the group should be via email, with Council members copied in, to ensure there is a clear record of matters being raised.
- 8.11 Council supported making better use of Cr Mark Sceats (NZC appointee) by clearly identifying matters it wishes to have raised with NZC and was suggested that a standing item could be included on Council agendas to identify actions required of the NZC appointee and for him to report back on progress.
- 8.12 ***Agreed [Murray Ferris/Kevin Coutts] that Council does not send a letter to the Minister at this time and instead seeks to address the identified communication and governance issues through the NZC appointee and appropriate NZC governance channels, with the matters to be monitored and reviewed. [26/07/8.12]***
- 9.0 **2026-2027 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN**
- 9.1 Arash Alaeinia informed Council that this agenda item related to the finalisation of the 2026-27 OWP and budget process. He advised that the papers had gone to print just prior to the recent announcement of the Minister's approval of the licence fee increase of \$2.
- 9.2 Arash advised that the OWP and budget had been updated to incorporate the changes proposed and confirmed at the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 25 June. He noted that the agenda item detailed the amendments made to the budget to bring the total back to 2025-26 levels and that the proposed funding from reserves was outlined on page 28 of the agenda.
- 9.3 ***Agreed [Scott Nicol/Pat Swift] that Council approves the proposed Operational Work Plan and Budget for the 2026-27 year. [26/07/9.3]***
- 9.4 ***Agreed [Scott Nicol/Pat Swift] that Council approves the proposed drawdown from reserves of \$61,002 as detailed. [26/07/9.4]***
- 9.5 ***Agreed [Scott Nicol Pat Swift] that Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer to approve expenditure during the financial year in accordance with Council-approved Operational Work Plan & Budget. [26/07/9.5]***
- 10.0 Council briefly discussed the possibility of Councillors attending meetings remotely. Concerns were raised about difficulties with technology and the ability to join meetings on time. Some Councillors agreed that online attendance could be appropriate for short,

targeted meetings and on occasions when a Councillor was unable to attend in person due to a one-off event or circumstances such as poor weather affecting travel. It was also noted that difficulties can arise when some participants attend in person while others join remotely, and that it may be preferable for meetings to be conducted either entirely in person or entirely online.

11.0 Council adjourned for lunch at 12.00pm and reconvened at 12.23pm.

12.0 GAME SEASON CONDITIONS – INITIAL CONSIDERATION

12.1 Cr Lindsay Lyons informed Council that the purpose of the discussion was to provide additional time for deliberations ahead of the October meeting's consideration of the 2027 Game Season Conditions. Arash Alaeinia asked whether there were any specific matters that Council would like staff to investigate, noting that early direction would provide sufficient time for due diligence and preparation an appropriate paper for Council's consideration.

12.2 Points of discussion included:

- **Hen pheasant harvest opening weekend only:** Previous unsuccessful proposals to include hen pheasants on the schedule for opening weekend were discussed. The proposal was intended to support youth participation and provide opportunities for dog training but was not supported.
- **Grey teal:** Nelson-Marlborough Council has submitted a paper to NZC proposing that grey teal be added to the game bird schedule. Council discussed difficulties in distinguishing grey teal from brown teal, the low numbers of brown teal, differences in behaviour between the species and the locations of regional populations. It was noted that the proposal will be considered at the next NZC meeting, following which feedback is expected to be sought from regions.
- **Season length / MOU with Auckland/Waikato:** Council discussed whether Eastern Region should align its game season with the Auckland/Waikato Region under the MOU. Staff clarified that the MOU was established to enable the regions to support and work more closely with each other, but each region remains responsible for determining its own game bird season length. Cr Kevin Coutts pushed for a straight answer if our Duck season would be taken as to be the same as Auckland Waikato. Arash Alaeinia responded that we will follow our process and make decisions based on our data for our region. There is practicality in sharing of resources and working collaboratively with our neighbouring region.
- **Duck populations:** It was noted that duck populations in the Auckland/Waikato Region differ substantially from areas of the Eastern Region, such as the East Coast, Taupo, and Bay of Plenty. The Bay of Plenty also has a high density of hunters. The Eastern Region relies, in part on the movement of birds from the Auckland/Waikato Region to supplement local populations.
- **Sex-specific bag limits:** A suggestion was made to reconsider a sex based bag limit for opening weekend, limiting the harvest of hens.
- **Game Season Conditions Policy:** Matt McDougall highlighted that the Game Season Conditions Policy is reviewed every three to five years and has been reviewed twice in the past three years. He advised that the policy provides an established framework for decision-making and suggested that any proposal to amend the policy needed to follow the process prescribed under the Standing Orders. This included a requirement for three-fifths of Council to agree to an investigation before a formal policy change can be considered. Any proposed amendments therefore need to be progressed through the appropriate process rather than being reconsidered on an ad hoc basis.

- **HPAI and duck banding:** Questions were raised regarding the implications HPAI for duck banding operations. Current advice from MPI/NZC indicates banding would need to cease once HPAI arrives in New Zealand but could potentially resume once HPAI is well established. However, operational staff within both organisations have reportedly identified the value of continuing banding as an important surveillance tool. Clarification on this matter is being sought.
- **Communication/coordination concerns:** Concerns were raised regarding a disconnect between MPI senior management and operational teams, as well as similar communication issues between NZC and Fish & Game operations staff. NZC has now established an operational HPAI team involving experts from across the organisation to consider these matters and provide input into the HPAI response plan.
- **Pond feeding and grain:** Council discussed the implications of HPAI restrictions for pond feeding. If duck banding is prohibited, Council will also need to consider the implications for pond feeding. Grain and bands need to be ordered well in advance, so urgent discussion needs to occur.

13.0 BIOSECURITY HPAI H5 & GOLD CLAMS

13.1 **HPAI A5** - Arash Alaeinia provided an update on the national and regional response to HPAI. He advised that there is a national HPAI response plan, alongside a regional plan which is continually being updated. The Eastern Region has benefited from proactive engagement from territorial local authorities (TLAs), including Regional and District Councils. Meetings, which were previously held monthly, are now occurring weekly to discuss operational processes and coordination. He advised that the Regional Council has secured funding for personal protective equipment (PPE), some of which has been shared with Fish & Game. NZC has also received PPE and distributed it to regions. The Eastern Region is considered to be relatively proactive and well advanced in its planning and has shared its approach with other regions to assist them in developing their own processes.

13.2 The following points were discussed:

- **Roles and responsibilities:** Fish & Game is not considered a first responder for HPAI incidents. Birds found in public places will generally be managed by the relevant Regional or District Council, while birds found on private land will be the responsibility of the landowner. If birds are found in Fish & Game hunting areas and require removal, the relevant local authority will be contacted. Removal will generally only occur where the birds present a public health risk.
- **Disposal of dead birds:** A key outstanding issue is the disposal of birds following a mass mortality event. BoP Regional Council is investigating potential disposal sites, including a farm it has purchased, to provide capacity for disposal following a potential mass cull. The option of using the GDC crematorium was discussed; however, this is not considered suitable because birds would be collected in plastic bags and the crematorium is unable to burn plastic. Opening the bags would also create additional handling and health risks.
- **Leaving birds in situ:** Council discussed whether allowing dead birds to naturally deteriorate could contribute to further disease transmission, particularly through scavenging birds. It was noted that dead birds may include infected birds, while surviving birds may develop immunity and contribute to population-level immunity. Removing birds also presents risks, as handling and disturbance can cause additional stress to sick birds and increase risks to people involved in collection. While the risk of transmission to humans is considered low, the consequences of infection can be severe.

- **Potential spread and migratory species:** Discussion included the potential spread of HPAI and the role of migratory bird species. It was noted that pelagic species that feed in Antarctic and sub-Antarctic environments are potential vectors for introduction and spread.
- **PPE and operational readiness:** Our region has appropriate PPE supplies for staff undertaking field activities, with equipment to be kept in vehicles to enable staff to safely investigate incidents involving dead birds. Larger response kits have also been provided for situations where Fish & Game may be called upon to support other agencies.
- **Biosecurity procedures:** Processes are being implemented for managing people entering our site who might arrive with dead birds.
- **Testing and surveillance:** Council discussed whether MPI intends to increase testing. Matt McDougall noted that MPI is considering the use of environmental DNA (eDNA) to identify species from environmental samples and suggested that consideration could also be given to using this approach to detect the virus. However, the instability of the virus presents challenges for applying current eDNA techniques. Work is continuing to investigate whether these challenges can be overcome. A potential advantage of this approach would be the ability to retrospectively analyse existing samples.

13.3 **Gold Clam Update** - Arash Alaeinia provided an update on the Gold Clam response, noting that he had followed up with the Regional Council due to concerns that Gold Clam tends to become a heightened issue with local communities and stakeholders immediately before the opening of the fishing season or other high-profile holiday weekends.

Arash advised that Greg Corbett (Bay of Plenty Regional Council) is leading the Gold Clam response and had provided the presentation included in the agenda. He has also offered to present the information directly to Council if required. The presentation had been prepared for the Te Arawa Lakes Trust Committee meeting. Arash understood that there is ongoing work underway and a longer-term management plan has also been developed, which is expected to require significant funding and take several years to implement.

13.4 The following points were discussed:

- **Long-term management:** The proposed long-term response is expected to require significant financial investment and several years to implement. The Regional Council currently has approximately **\$250,000** available for preliminary investigations.
- **Boat and trailer decontamination:** Questions were raised about the proposed electronic system for managing boat and trailer movements, including who would be responsible for funding and management of the system. It was acknowledged that these matters have not yet been resolved.
- **Eradication:** Murray Ferris questioned whether there is currently any work focused on eradicating Gold Clam, noting previous efforts undertaken for didymo. It was noted that a PhD student may be undertaking research, through the Regional Council or Te Arawa Lakes Trust, into whether eradication is possible.
- **Scale of the issue and restrictions:** Questions were raised about the justification for the current level of restrictions given the limited number of known locations affected. It appears that great emphasis is being placed on preventing gold clam from entering other waters ways, rather than containing and managing its spread from waterways already affected. It was noted that Gold Clam has been identified in the Waikato and at Taupō, with a further incident reported in New Plymouth, but that no other lake in New Zealand currently has the same level of restrictions.

14.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

14.1 Finance Report

- 14.2 Cr Lindsay Lyons questioned whether Zon guns remain necessary and whether their effectiveness justifies the ongoing cost of maintaining them. Matt McDougall advised that they can be effective when used in conjunction with a shotgun but needed to be moved regularly to prevent birds becoming accustomed to them. Eben Herbert noted that Zon guns can be a useful tool in the right circumstances but questioned whether the purchase and maintenance of Zon guns should be the responsibility of individual landowners.

14.3 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Alec McIver) that the payments for April and May 2026 totalling \$399,168.47 be approved. [26/07/14.3]*

14.4 Management Report

- 14.5 Arash Alaeinia advised that the Management Report was limited due to staff leave and bereavement. Cr Murray Ferris asked whether the Waioeka and Motu rivers were scheduled for drift dives, noting previous attempts were curtailed by poor weather. Arash Alaeinia to follow up.
- 14.6 Cr Mark Sceats asked about funding which had been approved for navigation markers at Waikaremoana. Cr Murray Ferris advised that he would contact the Waikaremoana Boating & Fishing Association to ask them to send Council an update and confirm whether the funding is still required or should be withdrawn for the time being.
- 14.7 Cr Lindsay Lyons highlighted the importance of advocating for the Ngongotaha trout hatchery through the Fish & Game Reform Bill process, noting its significance not only to the Eastern Region lakes fisheries, but to anglers across the New Zealand and international tourism. Council discussed the high cost of an economic impact assessment and opportunities to fund this through organisations such as Lotto. Arash Alaeinia to follow up.
- 14.8 Council discussed the distribution of media releases and highlighted inaccuracies in a recent release. Arash Alaeinia advised that the article had been reviewed by F & G prior to release and despite amendments having been provided the article was still published with these inaccuracies.
- 14.9 Arash Alaeinia noted that Eastern Fish & Game staff continue to provide operational support to the New Zealand Council and other Fish & Game Regions.

14.10 Licence Sales Report

- 14.11 Cr Mark Sceats raised concerns about the potential impact of HPAI on Fish & Game revenue, including the risk of negative public perception around bird flu. Kate Thompson noted that there was certainly a need for some discussion and planning around this potential fall in revenue. Cr Kevin Coutts queried the decline in family licences and whether this related to the change in its conditions. Kate Thompson confirmed that this was likely. Mark Sceats noted that these changes had been driven by the Minister.

15.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

15.1 *Report from Bay of Plenty Conservation Board*

No Report

15.2 *Report from Department of Conservation*

No Report

15.3 *Report from New Zealand Council*

Mark Sceats noted that Council had received the June meeting communique which focussed largely on the budget process. He advised that the Acting CEO's part-time contract had been extended to end of December and that the position had been advertised, with Mark serving on the selection committee. The new role will be full-time position and is based on the previous job description.

Mark also noted that the CFO and Office Manager at the New Zealand Council had recently resigned and that the Council would be reviewing its staffing structure. Cr Murray Ferris asked whether this review would also consider the overall health of the organisation and reasons for recent staff departures.

15.4 *Report from the Chair*

Cr Lindsay Lyons' written report had been pre-circulated and Council discussion covered the following items:

- Staff representation and PSA union.
- Employer support through the Employers and Manufacturers Association
- Size of NZC agenda papers, legal requirement to publicly notify agendas at least eight working days before meetings
- Band returns through Auckland Waikato staff texting hunters on opening day asking whether they had banded birds, with a good response rate.
- Stone Jug Road access opening by Hon. James Meager
- Bequests and current FG policy
- Meeting with Rotorua NZ and local fishing guides

16.0 **GENERAL BUSINESS**

Cr Scott Nicol raised the potential to develop Fish and Game merchandise featuring artwork such as the paintings displayed in the meeting room or more generally the species we manage. Arash noted that NZ Fish & Game already provides items for sale such as hats, water bottles, etc and there should be potential to expand the range.

17.0 **MEETING CLOSED**

17.1 The meeting closed at 2.10pm.

.....
Lindsay Lyons
Chairman

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (28 MAY 2026)

3.1 *Agreed (Kevin Coutts/Alec McIver) that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th May 2026 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [26/05/3.1]*

3.5 MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING (25 JUNE 2026)

3.6 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Pat Swift) that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2026 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [26/07/3.6]*

6.0 HEALTH & SAFETY

6.2 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that Council receives the Health and Safety report. [26/07/6.2]*

7.0 RE-CONFIRMATION 2026-2027 LICENCE FEE RECOMMENDATION

7.3 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Alec McIver) that Council reconfirms resolutions [26/06/5.13], [26/06/5.14], [26/06/5.15], [26/06/5.16], as recorded in the minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 25 June 2026. [26/07/7.3]*

8.0 LETTER TO MINISTER JAMES MEAGER

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9.0 2026-2027 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

9.3 *Agreed [Scott Nicol/Pat Swift] that Council approves the proposed Operational Work Plan and Budget for the 2026-27 year. [26/07/9.3]*

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14.1 Finance Report

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5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

Ref: 7.02.01

13 September 2026

1. Purpose

A standing agenda item to disclose any Councillor (“Member”) Conflict of Interest or potential Conflict of Interest, and record this in the Councillor Conflict of Interest Register.

2. Background

In 2016 the Eastern Fish and Game Council adopted a revised policy and rules for dealing with Conflicts of Interest and these include providing a standing agenda item to allow Councillors to disclose any Conflict or highlight any potential conflict. The “Interest Register” ring binder will be circulated in the first part of each meeting for Councillors to record any interests. The Council should then discuss how it wants to deal with any interest or perceived interest identified.

Conflict of Interest (refer s2.7 Governance Policies) means when the member can be shown to have actual bias or apparent bias in respect of a matter¹ i.e:

- A member can be shown to have actual bias when a member’s decision or act in relation to a matter could give rise to an expectation of financial gain or loss (that is more than trivial) to the member (and/or to the member’s parent(s), child(ren), spouse, civil union partner, de facto partner, business partner(s)/associate(s), debtor(s) or creditor(s)).
- A member can be shown to have apparent bias when a member’s official duties or responsibilities to the Council in relation to a matter could reasonably be said to be affected by some other interest or duty that the member has.
- A member’s “interest or duty” includes the interests of that member’s parent(s), child(ren), spouse, civil union partner or de facto partner that may be affected by the matter at issue. It also includes the interests of a person with whom the member has a close, personal relationship where there is a real danger of personal favouritism.
- There is no Conflict of Interest where the member’s other interest or duty is so remote or insignificant that it cannot reasonably be regarded as likely to influence him or her in carrying out his or her responsibility.

A potential conflict of interest (refer s2.8 Governance Policies) arises when:

1. There is a realistic connection between the member’s private interest(s) and the interest(s) of the Council;

¹ “Matter” means:

(i) The Council’s performance of its functions or exercise of its powers as set out in Part 5A of the Conservation Act 1987, subject to the Council’s statutory purpose set out in section 26P(1) of the Conservation Act; or

(ii) An arrangement, agreement, or contract made or entered into, or proposed to be entered into, by the Council.

2. The member's other interest could specifically affect, or be affected by, the actions of the Council in relation to a matter;
3. A fair-minded lay observer might reasonably consider that the member's private interest or duty may influence or motivate the actions of the member in relation to a matter; and
4. There is a risk that the situation could undermine public trust and confidence in the member or the Council.

Conflicts of Interest should be dealt with as follows (refer s1.13 Standing Orders):

1.13.1 Every member present at a meeting must declare any direct or indirect conflict of interest that they hold in any matter being discussed at the meeting, other than an interest that they hold in common with the public.

1.13.2 When a conflict of interest arises in respect of a matter, the affected member will:

- not vote on issues related to the matter;
- not discuss the matter with other members;
- conform to the majority view of other members present as to whether to be excluded from discussions regarding the matter and/or leave the room when the matter is discussed;
- not, subject to the discretion of the Chairperson, receive further papers or other information related to the matter.

1.13.3 Where a member can be shown to have a potential conflict of interest, the Council (excluding the affected member) will determine an appropriate course of action, which may include the following:

- applying some or all of the actions applied to a member with a conflict of interest (set out in 1.13.2 i) – iv) above);
- providing a written explanation outlining why there is no legal conflict of interest that can be made available to all Fish and Game Councils, licence holders and other interested parties.

1.13.4 The conflicted member will be given the opportunity to be heard by the Council on the points raised and the member's submissions will be taken into consideration by the Council.

1.13.5 The minutes must record the declaration and member's subsequent abstention from discussion and voting.

Councillors should take this opportunity to disclose any Conflict of Interest they are aware of now and record it in the circulated Conflict of Interest Register. If during the course of the meeting a conflict or perceived conflict is recognised, then this should be disclosed at that point in time.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That Councillors disclose any Conflict or potential Conflict of Interest, record it in the Interest Register, and Council agrees on how to deal with any Conflict of Interest raised.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Ref: 9.10

22 September 2026

Background

As part of its commitment to Health and Safety and to providing a safe working environment, the Eastern Fish and Game Council receives a Health and Safety report at each meeting. This report outlines the following:

- Implementation and adherence to the Health and Safety Plan, including Health and Safety as a standing agenda item at staff and ranger meetings;
- Monitoring and reporting in accordance with the Health and Safety Plan;
- Risk management, including the identification and treatment of new or emerging hazards;
- Training programmes, including information sharing and training of staff and volunteers;
- Health and Safety incidents, including near misses or injuries, and updates on previous incidents;
- Recommendations to Council.

Reporting Period: July – September 2026

1. Implementation and Adherence to the Health and Safety Plan

- Regular weekly staff meetings are held.
- Minutes from the Health and Safety section of each meeting are emailed to all staff.
- Visitors to the office and contractors are required to sign the desk register.
- The hazard register is updated as required.

Tailgate forms were completed for the following activities:

- Shoveler surveys
- Wairua escapement counts
- Tarawera outlet drift dive

Contractor induction forms:

- The Plumberman
- Van der Maat Plumbing & Drainage
- R Tywman building

Visitor induction/agreements for groups:

- Te Waiariki Purea Trust 17 pax
- New Sun Tours 23 pax
- Nuhaka School Camp 21 pax
- Western Heights High School 4 pax
- RAA – Children's fishing programme 28 pax

2. Monitoring and Reporting

Workplace Accident Register as at 22 September 2026

Number of workplace **injuries** in the 2025–2026 year: **2** (2024-2025 year: 3)

Number of workplace **near miss incidents** in the 2025-2026 year: **3** (2024-2025 year: 0)

3. Risk Management (Identification and Treatment)

Health and Safety notes are recorded during weekly staff meetings and emailed to all staff.

Key notes for the reporting period include:

20 July 2026: Nothing new

27 July 2026: Ice on roads, no new HPAI cases known, hazardous drivers

4 August 2026: Boat launching discussion, icy roads, Ben to check smoke alarms in staff quarters, Cert training on Saturday

10 August 2026: Frost on roads, normal ranging activities

17 August 2026: Ice of roads, closed waters poaching, check heater in upstairs office as smelt of burning

24 August 2026: Nothing new

31 August 2026: Still a lot of dodgy activity, poachers etc. Take care and call for backup. Be aware of high winds, branch down on walking track, check trees on site.

7 September 2026: Weather conditions – care when driving. A lot of poaching activity and poor behaviour – discussion Mangakakahi, upper Utuhina, Ngongotaha

14 September 2026: Sunscreen, hats, antihistamines for grounds and field work

21 September 2026: Changing weather, sunscreen, hats, antihistamines. Changes to MTOP – all boat work now requires two up

4. Training Programme

Nil

5. Health and Safety Incidents for this period

Near miss – Boating incident Lake Aniwhenua.

Staff member was launching Whio at Lake Aniwhenua boat ramp for purpose of Shovellor duck surveys. Working alone due to illness. The ramp is a long distance from the jetty so using a long bow line. As moving away from the shore unknown to them a part of the bow line had fallen into the water and became tangled around the propellor causing the motor to be shut down to clear. A wind squall came through at the same time and began to blow the boat. The auxiliary engine was started and used to gain control however the wind gusts were strong enough to blow the boat to the shore area where it was beached and rope cleared from propellor. No damage sustained to boat or engine.

INITIAL ACTIONS TAKEN

Training discussion with the staff group.

Advised Adam Daniel of incident on 04/08/2026 by phone.

Determined that as no injury or damage as per the MTOP no advice is required to MNZ.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS SUGGESTED

1. 2 up crewing for all boat work to ensure that sufficient capacity to deal with unforeseen circumstances such as an unexpected wind gust leading to events like this.
2. Ensuring all ropes/lines are inboard vessel while underway and engine operating.

6. Recommendation

That Council acknowledges receipt of this Health and Safety Report.

7. REVISED NATIONAL POLICY ON GAME BIRD CAUSING DAMAGE OR NUISANCE

Ref: 6.01.04

14 September 2026

1. Purpose

To consider the revised New Zealand Fish & Game Council National Policy on Game Birds Causing Damage or Nuisance and its supporting Standard Operating Procedure, assess the documents against the feedback previously provided by Eastern Fish & Game Council.

2. Background

NZC has revised the proposed national policy and SOP following concerns raised by Regions about the earlier Crop Depredation Policy. Eastern's May 2026 Council paper supported a consistent national framework but emphasised that it should be developed collaboratively with suitably qualified regional staff, preserve regional discretion, and distinguish governance policy from operational practice.

Other Fish & Game Council's raised similar matters. It supported national guidance but sought recognition of differing regional delivery models, clear separation between policy and procedure, retention of regional discretion over implementation and resourcing, and confirmation that national guidance would not displace regional operational decision-making.

The revised policy now states that its purpose is to provide a consistent, lawful and proportionate framework for responding to game-bird damage or nuisance while supporting sustainable populations and public hunting opportunities. It is intended to apply across all Fish & Game regions and settings.

3. Overview of Document

The revised draft substantially addresses the main concerns previously raised by Eastern. However, there are still sections in both the policy and SOP that are not clear in their intent or practical application.

Earlier regional concern	Response in revised draft	Assessment
Regional discretion	The policy expressly recognises regional discretion and flexibility. Lethal control, site visits and field assistance are determined regionally.	Addressed
Policy and operations	The governance policy and operational SOP are presented as distinct documents.	Addressed
Resourcing	Regions are not required to own or provide equipment, and field support may be contracted subject to regional staffing and resources.	Addressed
Proportionate response	Non-lethal methods are the default where practicable, with escalation to lethal control at regional discretion.	Addressed

Earlier regional concern	Response in revised draft	Assessment
Reporting burden	Annual reporting largely continues current practice, supported by standard templates.	Largely addressed
Status and authority	The draft does not clearly state whether it is mandatory national policy or guidance that regions may adapt.	Outstanding

4. Management Recommendation

Management considers that the revised policy and SOP are a significant improvement and substantially respond to the feedback previously provided by Eastern. The documents now recognise regional flexibility, distinguish governance policy from operational procedure, avoid requiring regions to maintain equipment, and provide for proportionate escalation from non-lethal measures to lethal control.

However, there are still some practical applications that need to be addressed and policy details that need clearer explanation of their intent. We encourage NZC to continue working with the regional experts/working party to address these gaps before the documents are finalised.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1** *Receives this report.*
- 5.2** *Notes that the revised National Policy on Game Birds Causing Damage or Nuisance and supporting SOP substantially address the feedback previously provided by Eastern Fish & Game Council.*
- 5.3** *Supports the revised policy and SOP in principle, subject to the amendments and clarifications identified in this paper.*
- 5.4** *Encourages NZC to continue working with suitably qualified regional staff to finalise the policy, SOP and templates.*

National Policy – Game Birds Causing Damage or Nuisance

Purpose

This policy establishes a consistent, lawful, and proportionate framework for responding to damage or nuisance caused by game birds while supporting sustainable game bird populations and public hunting opportunities.

Scope

This policy applies to all Fish & Game regions, all game bird species managed under the Wildlife Act 1953, and all settings (farms, airports, wastewater facilities, public areas, and private land).

Statutory Authority

All authorities and decisions must comply with the Wildlife Act 1953, associated delegations, and other relevant legislation. The authorization is the broad legal approval for an activity that would otherwise be prohibited under the Wildlife Act and a permit is the specific instrument or document that grants that authorization and usually contains conditions.

Policy Principles

- Early and timely intervention
- Proportionality and minimal harm
- Non-lethal methods as the default where practicable
- Regional discretion and flexibility
- Clear separation between governance policy and operational practice
- Advisory/authorising role for Fish & Game
- Transparent reporting and accountability

Permit Framework

Step 1 – Non-lethal disturbance (default) where practicable.

Step 2 – Lethal control at discretion of the Region and proportionate to the issue at hand or take eggs of or destroy eggs of

Mandatory Requirements

- All disturbance or lethal actions require an authorisation, and the permit issued conveys the conditions of that authorisation.
- Time-bound, purpose-specific conditions must be included.
- Regions are not required to own or maintain equipment.
- Standard reporting is required.

Standard Operating Procedure

Standard Operating Procedures - Game Bird Nuisance Procedure provides guidance to staff for consistency in approach, operational efficiency, improved employee onboarding, and ensuring compliance with safety and legal regulations.

Regional Flexibility

Site visits are discretionary and based on risk. Trusted operators may be streamlined.

Compliance and Review

Regions will retain records and the NZC will periodically review this policy. Reporting will continue to occur in annual reports which involves no change to current practice.

Standard Operating Procedure – Game Bird Nuisance Procedure

Roles

Regional Managers approve permits; staff provide advice and draft authorities/permits ; landholders receive permits but can delegate permitted actions.

Service Levels

Enquiries acknowledged within two working days with follow-up as soon as possible afterwards.

Intake and Assessment

Collect information about species, numbers, nature of nuisance, location, history, methods tried, and safety considerations. Photos of what is happening can also be useful.

Risk Assessment

Use regional risk categories (low to critical). Site visits are discretionary.

Consider Options and recommend response from non-lethal disturbance and/or lethal control

Non-Lethal Response Where Practicable

Issue a Permit to Disturb with conditions. Rotate scare devices and ensure safe use.

Escalation to Lethal Control

Used only at Regional discretion. Must specify persons authorised to undertake disturbance, maximum numbers, species, method, duration and reporting and ideally not occur in April or during the season unless all persons have a game bird hunting license.

Or take eggs or destroy eggs

Trusted Operator Pathway

Streamlined where compliance history supports it.

Equipment and Assistance

Councils are not required to provide equipment. Any field support may be contracted separately depending on staffing resources in the region.

Site Visits

Site visits are at the discretion of the region.

Record Keeping and Reporting

Use standard templates and ensure timely returns. Continue to report annually on total permits issued in your annual report.

Compliance Monitoring

Risk-based checks; non-compliance may affect future permits.

Review and Ongoing Work

Annual review of SOP for improvements. Regions to collaboratively put together a handbook of response options by game bird species for future use.

The current authority requires Fish and Game to indemnify DoC

8. DRAFT HPAI NATIONAL POLICY

File: 1.07.01

15 September 2026

1. Purpose

The New Zealand Fish & Game Council (NZC) has circulated a draft National HPAI Policy for feedback from regional Fish & Game councils. Once adopted, the policy is intended to apply across all regions.

The purpose of this paper is to consider the draft policy and determine Eastern Fish & Game Council's feedback.

2. Background

NZC has developed a draft National HPAI Policy setting out the governance framework, organisational accountabilities and minimum requirements for preparing for and responding to High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza H5N1 ("HPAI H5N1" or "bird flu").

The policy applies to all Fish & Game governance bodies, employees, contractors and volunteers when undertaking Fish & Game functions or representing Fish & Game in relation to HPAI H5N1.

In addition to establishing governance and accountability expectations, the draft policy includes a range of detailed operational requirements and practices.

3. Overview of Document

The draft policy establishes a governance framework and minimum organisational requirements. However, it also prescribes detailed operational matters, like; PPE levels, staff training, banding, botulism clean-ups, bird disposal, regulatory preparation, communications processes and crisis-response arrangements.

Most of these operational matters would be more appropriately addressed through the adaptable HPAI Preparation and Response Plan. Embedding detailed operational requirements within national policy creates the following risks:

3.1 Duplication

The operational requirements are already substantially addressed through the existing HPAI Preparation and Response Plan and associated procedures.

3.2 Inconsistency

If the national policy and response plan are maintained separately, their requirements may conflict.

This is already evident in the draft policy's staged framework, which assumes a progression from HPAI being overseas, to approaching New Zealand, and then to a confirmed New Zealand incursion. H5N1 has now been confirmed in New Zealand, meaning parts of the proposed framework have already been overtaken by events.

3.3 Outdated requirements

Detailed operational requirements may become obsolete before the policy is formally adopted, particularly where official health, biosecurity or scientific advice changes.

3.4 Reduced operational flexibility

Staff must be able to respond according to current agency guidance, local circumstances, health and safety obligations and site-specific risk assessments. A prescriptive national policy could unnecessarily restrict that flexibility.

3.5 Unclear organisational role

Fish & Game is not the lead agency responsible for disease control, biosecurity, or public-health responses.

Fish & Game's role is to support the official response, protect its people, communicate with licence holders and stakeholders, and continue its statutory functions where it is safe, lawful and practical to do so. It should not independently determine national disease-control measures.

4. Management Recommendation

Eastern Fish & Game supports the development of a national HPAI policy that establishes, enduring governance principles, clear responsibilities and accountabilities, alignment with lead agencies, effective national coordination, minimum organisational outcomes, and consistent national messaging.

Eastern does not support detailed operational requirements being embedded within the national policy.

Response phases, PPE specifications, training, bird handling and banding, botulism procedures, carcass disposal, clean-up participation, communications protocols and regulatory preparation should remain within the adaptable HPAI Preparation and Response Plan, regional plans, health and safety systems, and supporting procedures.

The national policy should expressly recognise that regional councils:

- remain separate statutory bodies and PCBUs;
- retain accountability for their staff and regional operational decisions;
- must be able to adapt implementation to local circumstances, capability, resources and risk assessments; and
- remain responsible for discharging their statutory and health and safety obligations.

National arrangements should coordinate and support regional responses without transferring regional decision-making authority or imposing unclear or unfunded operational obligations.

There is merit in establishing:

- a clear national Fish & Game position on HPAI;
- national coordination with MPI, Biosecurity New Zealand, the Department of Conservation, Health New Zealand and other relevant agencies;
- measures to protect staff, volunteers, contractors, licence holders and the public;
- a commitment to continue Fish & Game's statutory functions where it remains safe, lawful and practical;
- information and communications consistent with current official advice;

- an adaptable national HPAI Preparation and Response Plan; and
- coordinated national messaging and information updates.

However, detailed operational requirements should be removed from the national policy, including:

- response phases and activation levels;
- PPE requirements;
- staff training;
- bird handling, banding and disposal;
- botulism responses;
- culling and dispersal;
- regional preparedness and reporting requirements;
- operational communications protocols; and
- game-bird management responses.

These matters should instead be addressed through the HPAI Preparation and Response Plan, regional plans, health and safety systems, and supporting operational procedures.

5. Recommendations

That the Eastern Fish and Game Council:

- 5.1 Notes the draft National High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza Policy.***
- 5.2 Supports the development of a concise national HPAI policy that establishes enduring governance principles, responsibilities and accountabilities.***
- 5.3 Supports National Office to meaningfully engage with expert staff from within the Regions in the development of this policy.***
- 5.3 Does not support the policy in its current form.***
- 5.3 Requests that detailed operational requirements—including PPE, training bird handling, banding, carcass disposal, communications and field-response procedures—be removed from the national policy and retained within the adaptable HPAI H5N1 Preparation and Response Plan.***
- 5.4 Supports management’s position and proposed changes set out in this paper.***

High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) Policy

Section	Operational
Contact/Owner	NZC HR
Last Review	New Policy
Next Review	Before each game bird season [DATE] and/or after any material change in official guidance
Approval	NZC
Effective Date	Aug 2026

PURPOSE

1. This policy sets out the governance framework and Fish & Game New Zealand's accountabilities and minimum requirements for preparing for and responding to high pathogenicity avian influenza H5N1 ("HPAI H5N1" or "bird flu").
2. The policy recognises Fish & Game NZ's statutory role in managing game bird hunting, its direct relationship with licence holders, and its duty to protect employees, volunteers, game bird hunters, as well as maintaining organisational credibility.

Support our values:

- Trust
- Inclusion
- Connection
- Service

3. This policy applies to all Fish & Game NZ governance bodies, employees, contractors and volunteers when undertaking Fish & Game NZ functions or representing Fish & Game NZ in relation to HPAI H5N1.

POLICY

Policy statement

4. Fish & Game NZ will take a science-based, precautionary approach to HPAI H5N1. The organisation will support the national biosecurity response, follow official advice, maintain communications with staff and licence holders, and continue its core functions where it is safe to do so.
5. Fish & Game NZ's role is to support, amplify and align with official advice while managing the impacts for game bird hunting, staff safety, regional operations &

continuity, and licence holder communications.

6. Every Fish & Game Regional Council is responsible for translating national guidance into local arrangements and actions. Where this policy, a regional plan, or any subordinate document conflict, MPI guidance takes precedence, followed by this policy. Regions should not adopt local positions that depart from MPI or national Fish & Game policy or guidance.

Scope

7. This policy covers preparedness, response, communications, health and safety, stakeholder engagement, regional operations and post-event review. It does not replace legal requirements, including employment obligations, especially around Health and Safety. Fish & Game NZ does not lead national disease control, biosecurity, or public health advice — those responsibilities sit with the relevant statutory agencies.

Guiding principles

8. **Lead agency alignment:** Fish & Game NZ will align with Biosecurity NZ / MPI as the national biosecurity lead, DOC on threatened species and public conservation land, and health agencies on human health advice.

Safety first: Staff, volunteers, licence holders, contractors and the public are not to be placed at unnecessary risk.

Science-led decisions: Organisational positions are to be based on evidence, official advice and documented risk assessments — not speculation or public pressure.

Calm and consistent communication: Messages will be factual, measured, practical and coordinated, avoiding unnecessary alarm.

Regional readiness: Regions are encouraged to prepare for HPAI H5N1 scenarios, including local detections, reporting surges, requests for assistance and possible changes to game bird hunting regulations.

One organisation, one voice: Public statements and media responses are to be coordinated through the Fish and Game NZ CEO.

Risk Phases

9. Both national and regional preparedness activity is scaled to the risk phase in effect (as directed by MPI). Fish & Game NZ can apply a risk phase regionally, i.e. Phase 3 will apply to the region where H5N1 is present, rather than a blanket application across all Fish & Game NZ regions. The Phases, including regional detections, will be based on MPI advice. NZ CEO/COO will advise the region if their phase changes.

- **Phase 1 — Alert and watch:** H5N1 is overseas. Focus is quiet, steady preparedness.
- **Phase 2 — Heightened risk:** H5N1 is closer to New Zealand (e.g. Ross Sea/Antarctica or Australia). Focus is raising readiness without raising alarm.
- **Phase 3 — Confirmed incursion:** H5N1 is present in New Zealand. Focus is a fast, calm, coordinated response.
- **Phase 4 — Established:** H5N1 is established in the wild bird population. Focus is sustained, business-as-usual management.

MINIMUM ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Preparedness

10. Fish & Game NZ must maintain a current national HPAI H5N1 Preparation and Response

Plan, communications toolkit, crisis response structure, regional contact list and staff guidance. Each region should understand its local role in relation to regional council preparedness, potential disposal arrangements, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supply and use, staff training, licence holder messaging, public enquiries and requests for operational assistance.

Reporting and surveillance support

11. Fish & Game NZ will encourage all licence holders, staff and the public to report three or more sick or dead wild birds in a group to the Biosecurity New Zealand exotic pest and disease hotline on **0800 80 99 66**, or any updated official reporting channel. Staff must not handle or move suspected HPAI birds unless directed through official arrangements and supported by appropriate PPE, training and approvals.

Health, safety and biosecurity

12. Fish & Game NZ will apply a precautionary approach to staff safety. PPE requirements, hygiene practices, cleaning and disinfection, bird handling, dog-related precautions and fieldwork decisions should follow the current response plan and official health and safety guidance. Where official risk information is unavailable or unclear, managers should escalate for advice and adopt the lower risk option until clarification is received. NZC will assist regions to source PPE and organise training through the Health & Safety Representative Committee.

Communications

13. All HPAI H5N1 communications must be coordinated through NZC, factual and consistent with the Crisis Communications Plan and Toolkit. Fish & Game NZ will amplify official advice, explain what it means for game bird hunters and staff, and avoid creating competing technical information. Human health content must be checked against health agency guidance before release. Media enquiries should be referred through the NZC CEO.

Game bird hunting, access and regulatory decisions

14. Fish & Game NZ will maintain lawful and sustainable game bird hunting where it is safe and responsible to do so. Any proposed change to game bird hunting access, local restrictions, bag limits, season length or broader regulatory settings must be based on official advice, documented risk considerations, regional input and following the required statutory process.

Dead bird collection and disposal

15. Fish & Game NZ will not undertake dead bird collection, transport or disposal unless the activity is authorised, risk-assessed, resourced and aligned with MPI, regional council and landowner requirements. Any such activity must have clear approval, trained personnel, appropriate PPE, safe decontamination arrangements, a lawful disposal pathway and a documented record of the event.

Regional preparedness plans

16. At a minimum, every regional preparedness plan should include:
 - A copy of, and alignment with, the Fish & Game HPAI H5N1 Preparation and Response Plan including the HPAI H5N1 Crisis Communications Plan and the HPAI H5N1 Communications Toolkit.

- A documented strategy for acquiring the PPE recommended in the NZAIHSGW², noting where the regional/unitary council will provide PPE or staff training.
- Evidence that staff have been trained in the use of the recommended PPE, including fit testing of masks.
- Current contacts for the region's Regional/unitary Council, DOC and mana whenua/iwi partners, and an understanding of the council's own preparedness and clean-up plan, including Fish & Game NZ's role.
- Scenario planning for foreseeable local situations, such as members of the public bringing sick or dead birds to a Fish & Game office, or requests from the public to collect dead birds.
- A record of current MPI guidance on culling or disturbing wild birds in response to H5N1.
- A ready-to-use plan for altering game regulations or closing areas if necessary, using the Regulation Amendment Cover Template.

PPE requirements and operational procedures

17. PPE levels are based on MPI's assessment of the likelihood of H5N1 being present around an operation. Where MPI is unable to provide an assessment, staff should assume the likelihood is high and use the higher PPE level.

- **Level 1 PPE (gloves and footwear):** Handling apparently healthy, sick or dying birds where H5N1 has not been detected in the area, and MPI assesses the likelihood as low.
- **Level 2 PPE (Level 1 plus disposable fit-tested P2/N95 respirator, eyewear and fluid-resistant coveralls):** Handling apparently healthy birds where H5N1 has not been detected in the area but MPI assesses the likelihood as high.
- **Level 3 PPE (full hazmat):** contact with dead birds where H5N1 has not been detected but the likelihood is high, or where H5N1 has been detected.

18. In addition to PPE levels, staff should:

- Maintain heightened awareness of disease risk when working with wildlife.
- Maintain good biosecurity and hygiene practice, including scrubbing and disinfecting equipment, boots and clothing between sites, and cleaning hands and equipment between handling each bird.
- Not handle sick birds while unwell or immunocompromised.

Banding

19. Banding will be paused in regions experiencing Phase 3, until MPI advises Fish & Game it is safe to resume, because aggregating birds for banding can spread H5N1. Once H5N1 is established in New Zealand and MPI advises it is safe to do so, duck banding will resume with a heightened level of biosecurity and hygiene.

Botulism response

20. Standard botulism collection operations may continue during Phase 3, provided the PPE prescribed in the NZAIHSGW is followed based on the likelihood of H5N1 being in the area (Level 2 if likelihood is low and H5N1 is not detected locally; Level 3 if likelihood is high or

² New Zealand Avian Influenza Health and Safety Guidance for Workers

unknown).

21. When conducting botulism clean ups during Phase 3 regions must:

- Inform the relevant Regional or District Council.
- Inform MPI via the hotline (0800 80 99 66).
- Follow MPI's advice on whether birds should be tested for H5N1.
- Record the event, location, number of deaths and response.
- Update the national Fish & Game NZ database.

Culling and dispersing wild birds

22. Fish & Game Regions are encouraged to assist poultry farmers to minimise contact between wild birds and farmed birds. Permits to cull or disturb should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Any report of unauthorised disturbance or culling of birds must be investigated through the usual process.

Dead bird clean-up

23. Disposal of H5N1-affected birds may occur only via an MPI-approved method or facility, or a legally declared disposal site; currently, MPI must approve all dead bird collections. Regional/unitary councils are responsible for organising local clean-up; however, Fish & Game regions should prepare for the possibility of being asked to assist in a local clean-up by securing PPE and arranging for training staff in advance. Any removal of H5N1-killed animals requires MPI approval, Regional Council approval, a legal disposal site and Level 3 PPE.

Reporting

24. Where three or more sick or dead wild birds in a group are observed, it should be reported to the Biosecurity New Zealand exotic pest and disease hotline on **0800 80 99 66** (without touching or moving the birds). Staff should redirect members of the public to the hotline rather than accepting birds in person.

Crisis Response Team

25. The Chief Executive, or delegate, may activate the HPAI H5N1 crisis response team when a detection has operational implications for Fish & Game NZ, when official advice materially changes, when media or public interest escalates, or when regional managers require national coordination. Activation may be national or regional, depending on the event.

DISCUSSION

Regulatory change process

26. Where a region considers a change to the game bird Hunters Notice is required (for example, to bag limits, season length, or area closures), the Fish & Game Regional Council must pass a resolution and submit it to the Minister through the NZC (using the Regulation Amendment Cover Template). NZC cannot itself propose amendments — they must originate from a region with a supporting council decision. Regions are encouraged to draft potential amendments in advance, so they are ready if an urgent council meeting is required.

Communications

27. All external communications relating to H5N1 must follow the Fish & Game NZ HPAI H5N1 Crisis Communications Plan and draw on the pre-approved scenarios in the Communications Toolkit. Any local media enquiry referring specifically to a Fish & Game region should be notified to the Fish & Game Principal Communications Advisor, consistent with the no-surprises principle.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

Roles and accountabilities

28. The NZC is accountable for this policy and for ensuring national consistency across HPAI H5N1 preparedness and response. The Chief Executive is accountable for activation of national response arrangements, liaison with lead agencies and escalation to governance where required.
29. Regional Fish & Game councils are accountable for local preparedness and for maintaining relationships with regional and unitary authorities, mana whenua, regional DOC offices and other local stakeholders. Regional managers should ensure staff are aware of reporting pathways, PPE expectations, local response arrangements, communications escalation and the limits of Fish & Game NZ's functional role. Changes to the game bird Hunters Notice must follow the legislative process set out above.

Table 1: Roles and Responsibilities Table 2 under this policy

Role	Responsibility under this policy
NZC Chief Executive	Primary point of contact for MPI and DOC. Activates national response arrangements and alerts the Crisis Response Team, Regional Managers, NZC Chair and Regional Chairs on confirmation of an outbreak. Accountable to governance for the overall response.
Crisis Response Team	Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer, Principal Communications Advisor, Science Advisor and representatives from any impacted regions. Owns emergency communications and situational decisions during activation.
Regional Managers / Councils	Hold and maintain a current regional preparedness plan (Section 16). Lead local intelligence gathering, staff and stakeholder liaison, and regionally targeted communications. Nominate a delegate if multiple regions are impacted at once.
Regional Health & Safety Representatives	Confirm PPE ⁴ stock and staff training are current for the region. Escalate gaps to NZC.
All staff, contractors, volunteers	Follow current PPE levels and biosecurity procedures. Report sick or dead birds through the correct channel (Section 24). No person is to independently issue public advice, interpret human health risk, collect suspected HPAI carcasses, or approve disposal activity.

RECORDS, REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

30. The Fish & Game HPAI H5N1 Plan is intended to be a living document that will be updated in consultation with regions. As H5N1 spreads and becomes endemic, the Fish & Game HPAI H5N1 Plan will evolve; approval of this policy endorses the plan and the process in place to improve the document as needed.
31. Fish & Game NZ will keep records of HPAI-related decisions, official advice relied on, communications issued, operational assistance provided, PPE or training decisions, regional incidents and any changes to game bird hunting arrangements. Records must be sufficient to support accountability, organisational learning and future review. This policy must be reviewed before each game bird season and/or after any material change in official guidance.

9. DRAFT ANNUAL MEETING AND BUDGET TIMETABLE

Ref: 7.02.01

15 September 2026

1. Purpose

To determine Council's 2027 meeting dates and venues and provide feedback to the New Zealand Fish & Game Council on its draft 2027/28 Annual Meeting and Budget Timetable.

2. Background

Council is required to meet on at least six occasions between 1 February and 31 December each year.

Because regional feedback must be provided to the New Zealand Fish & Game Council (NZC) on important matters such as regulations, licence fees and other national initiatives, the timing of Eastern Council meetings need to align, as far as practicable, with the national decision-making schedule.

Council meetings are generally held at approximately two-monthly intervals during February, April, June, August, October and December. The meetings consider, among other matters, the key topics identified in the proposed timetable below.

Meetings are normally held on a Thursday at the Eastern Fish & Game Council office in Rotorua. They commence at 11.00 am, include a 20-minute working lunch and aim to conclude by 3.00 pm.

Council needs to determine its meeting dates for 2027, taking into account the provisional 2027 Annual Meeting and Budget Timetable prepared by NZC and appended to this agenda item. Council may also wish to review its usual meeting venue and times.

This year, NZC has brought the national budget-development timetable forward considerably. Under the proposed timetable, regional draft budgets would be required by Leech & Co (the accounting firm employed by NZC to administer its finances in lieu of a CFO or employed accountant) in early January 2027.

NZC has advised that the early submission date is required to enable its accounting provider to consolidate the regional budget workbooks prepared using the zero-based budgeting methodology. The proposed timetable would allow approximately four weeks for this consolidation, with confirmed regional budgets required by Leech and Partners in early March in preparation for the NZC meeting on the 9th of April ie a total of 3 months. Previously the budget information was required in mid-March, confirmed to Regions in late March in time for the NZC budget meeting in April.

3. Management Assessment

Staff have reviewed the proposed NZC Annual Meeting and Budget Timetable for 2027 and have concerns about the requirement for regional budget information to be submitted to Leech & Co in early January.

The proposed timeframe would require regions to undertake substantial budget-development work before sufficient current-year financial information is available and before regional councils have had an opportunity to consider their budgets, priorities and operational work plans.

Eastern's budget and Operational Work Plan should be developed using the most reliable and current financial information available. Undertaking detailed budget preparation during February allows additional months of actual expenditure to be considered when forecasting the year-end position and setting priorities for the following financial year.

The proposed budget and first draft of the Operational Work Plan can then be presented to Council in March. This enables Council to consider and approve the regional budget while allowing the Operational Work Plan to be further developed and finalised through the subsequent Council meetings.

Management does not support the proposed January deadline for regional budget submissions.

In practical terms, Council would need to begin determining its 2027/28 priorities at its October 2026 meeting. Management would then need to prepare a draft Operational Work Plan and budget for consideration at the December 2026 meeting so the information could be submitted to NZC in early January.

Management understands that Leech & Co requested the early submission date to provide sufficient time to consolidate the regional budgets. However, allowing approximately four weeks for the consolidation and return to Regions represents an excessive allowance of time and does not justify requiring every region to bring forward its governance and budget-development processes.

By comparison, the most recent internal consolidation of all regional budgets for NZC was completed over approximately one week. As Leech & Co is a paid service provider, NZC should determine a reasonable timetable that supports sound regional governance and budget preparation, with the provider expected to deliver within that timetable. In the past this has been completed by one person over a 2 week period.

National accounting arrangements should support regional budget-development processes rather than require regions to undertake premature planning to accommodate a contractor's preferred timeframe.

4. Management Recommendation

Management recommends that Eastern advise NZC that it does not support the proposed January 2027 deadline for submitting detailed regional budget information.

Eastern should continue to develop its draft 2027/28 budget and Operational Work Plan during February, once sufficient current-year financial information is available. The proposed budget and first draft Operational Work Plan should be presented to Council in March, with the Operational Work Plan subsequently refined and finalised through the agreed 2027 meeting programme.

Management also recommends that NZC revise its annual budgeting timetable so that it better aligns with sound budget-development practice, regional governance requirements and operational realities.

Proposed Council Meeting and Budget Timetable for 2027 (subject to final NZC schedule). All proposed meetings are to be held on a Thursday at the Eastern Fish & Game Council office in Rotorua.

	Date	Venue	Key Topics
1	<i>Thurs 11 February 2027</i>	Rotorua	• Council Priorities, • Anglers Notice – initial consideration
2	<i>Thurs 18 March 2027</i>	Rotorua	• OWP - first draft plus proposed budget
3	<i>Thurs 27 May 2027</i>	Rotorua	• Licence Fees • OWP - second draft • Anglers Notice – finalise recommendations
4	<i>Thurs 5 August 2027</i>	Rotorua	• Finalise OWP • Game Conditions - initial consideration • Council & CEO Performance Review
5	<i>Thurs 21 October 2027</i>	Rotorua	• Annual Performance Report – draft • Game Conditions - consideration
6	<i>Thurs 9 December 2027</i>	Rotorua	• Game Conditions - finalise recommendations • Review Risk Register • Set Annual Council Meeting Schedules
AGM	<i>Thurs 9 December 2027</i>	Rotorua	• Present Annual Performance Report

5. Recommendations

That the Eastern Fish & Game Council:

- 5.1 Approves the proposed times, dates and location of its 2027 Council meetings, as set out in this paper, acknowledging that this may need to be adjusted to NZC updated meeting schedule at December Council meeting.***
- 5.2 Does not support the proposed January 2027 deadline for submitting detailed regional budget information to NZC's accounting provider.***
- 5.3 Confirms that Eastern staff will prepare the proposed 2027/28 budget and first draft Operational Work Plan during February for Council consideration in March 2027, with the Operational Work Plan subsequently refined and finalised through the agreed Council meeting programme.***
- 5.4 Requests that NZC revise its proposed timetable to better align national budgeting requirements with sound budget-development practice, established regional governance processes and operational realities.***

2026-27 Annual Budget & Meeting Schedule

Month		Date	Meeting/Activity	General Topic/Meeting	Location
Dec-2026		Friday 5 & Sunday 6 Dec	NZ Council Meeting (Held over 2 days) (2025/26 Strategy)		Wellington
		Friday 25 Dec	Christmas Day		
		Saturday 26 Dec	Boxing Day		
Jan-2027	Second week in Jan	Friday 1 Jan	New Year's Day		online
		Saturday 2 Jan	New Year's Day Observed		
	Third week Last week of Jan		Variance Reports & Reserves Schedules sent to CFO ZBB to be into Leech and Co Draft Hunters notice to be sent to Regions Info to ABCorp and Quantity of cards approved Game Bird licence		
		Tuesday 19 Jan	Webinar - Topic TBC		
		Saturday 23 Jan	Variance Reports & Reserves Updates Distributed		
		Saturday 30 Jan	Licence Working Party Licence Sales Forecast		
		Saturday 30 Jan	Regulation Details Due for Hunters Notice (from all Regional Councils)		
	Last Friday in Jan		Initial update (shared with Regions) of ZBB from Leech and Co		
Feb-2027	Always	Tuesday 2 Feb	World Wetland Day/Release Game Bird Habitat Stamp		Online 7pm-8:30pm
	First Week of Feb	Wednesday 3 Feb	Annotate changes to previous Game licence fees and form notice (DOC task)		
		Friday 5 Feb	Draft Hunters Notice Submission to DOC for comment		
		Saturday 6 Feb	Waitangi Day		
	Second week in Feb	Tuesday 9 Feb	Online meeting to approve Game bird Regulations		
		Tuesday 9 Feb	Hunters Regulation Guide Content Due to NZC Office from Regions		
	Third Week Third Tuesday	Wednesday 17 Feb	Consolidated regional budgets BACK to Regions Hunters Notice & Submission to MOC (MFHF) & Gazette Office Hunters Notice sent to Graphic Press for Layout Check Webinar - Topic TBC		
		Friday 19 Feb/or the following week	Publish Hunters Notice in NZ Gazette		
Mar-2027	First week	Friday 5 Mar	NZ Council Meeting (Day 1 of 2)		Wellington
		Friday 5 Mar	Governors Forum - Regional Chairs		
		Saturday 6 Mar	Governors Forum - Regional Chairs & NZC (Day 2 of 2)		
	Second Wednesday Second Thursday in Mar Second Friday		Regional Budgets confirmed to Leech and Co Game Magazine Released Game Bird Hunting Licences on Sale (2nd Thursday)		
		Thursday 11 Mar	Staff Development Grant Applications Close		
		Friday 12 Mar	Good Friday		
		Monday 29 Mar	Easter Monday		
Apr-27	Always a Sunday	Sunday 4 Apr	Mark-up/Pegging Day		Wellington
		Friday 9 Apr	NZ Council Budget meeting	Budget and Consultation meeting	
		Friday 16 April	Licence Fee Consultation doc distributed to Regions		
May-2027		Monday 26 Apr	Anzac Day		
	First Saturday	Saturday 1 May	Game Bird Season Opening Draft Anglers Notice circulated to Regions		
	Second Week		Licence Working Party Meeting		
			Regional responses to Licence Fee proposals, Anglers Notice & SFLFFN DW/sea run salmon Due to NZC Office	Licence Sales reforecast - Main fishing season has ended in April , Distribute LEQ targets to Regions so Feedback can be included in June NZC Meeting	
Jun-2027	First week	Tuesday 1 June	King's Birthday		Wellington
			Angler regulation guides to be updated by Regions		
		Friday 18 June	NZ Council Meeting (Consider Licence Fee and Budget feedback, Anglers Notice & SFLFFN)		
	Last Saturday	Saturday 19 June			
		Thursday 24 June	Licence fee, SFLFFN submission to MOC		
Jul-2027		Friday 25 June	Matariki		
		Saturday 26 June	GBHT Grant Applications Close		
	First Week		Anglers Notice submission to MOC (MFHF) Confirm Licence production numbers to ABCorp Send Angler Reg Guide to Graphic press for layout		
	Second Friday	Friday 9 July	GBHT Grant Applications Distributed to Board		
		Saturday 17 July	Anglers Notice Published in NZ Gazette		
Aug-2027		Wednesday 28 July	GBHT Board Meeting (11am)		Online
	First week		Election Public Notice Nominations Open Nominations Close		
		Sunday 22 Aug	GBHT Field Trip		
		Monday 23 Aug	GBHT Board Meeting		
		Wednesday 25 Aug	Fishing Magazine Released		
Aug-2027	Third Wednesday	Friday 27 Aug	NZ Council Meeting	Final budgets for Approval	Wellington

Month		Date	Meeting/Activity	General Topic/Meeting	Location
		Saturday 28 Aug		Last Meeting with current NZC	
		Tuesday 31 Aug	Fish & Game End of Financial Year		
Sept-2027	Always 1st Sept	Wednesday 1 Sept	Fishing licences go on Sale Start of new financial year Electoral Roll Closes		
	Wednesday				
Oct-2027	Second Friday	Thursday 1 Oct	Sports Fishing Opening Election Day	Results declared following Saturday.	
	Third Saturday		Official Declaration on election result		
	Last Saturday	Monday 25 Oct	Labour Day		
		Saturday 30 Oct	Ministerial Post Election Governance Hui	All regional councillors to attend	Wellington
Nov-2027	first week		High Country Sports Fishing Opening (CSI & NC 1st Sat Nov) All Regional council must have held their first meeting	Otago and Southland 1st Nov NC and CSI 1st Saturday Within 3 weeks of Election results confirmed	
Dec-2027		Friday 3 Dec	NZ Council Meeting	First Meeting with new NZC	Wellington
		Saturday 4 Dec	(2027/28 Strategy)		Wellington

KEY	
	Public Holiday
	NZ Council Meeting
	GBHT Board Meeting
	Governors Forum (Regional Chairs & NZC)

10. EASTERN REGIONAL HPAI H5 ACTION PLAN

Ref: 6.01.04

16 September 2026

1. Purpose

This plan provides Eastern Fish and Game Council with a regional framework for preparing for, responding to and managing highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1. It supports staff safety, surveillance, game-bird management, hunter communications and coordination with lead agencies.

2. Background

MPI leads the animal-disease response. Eastern supports reporting, regional coordination, field intelligence, communications and lawful game-bird management. The plan applies to Council staff, honorary rangers, contractors, volunteers and Eastern activities involving waterfowl.

Response framework

Preparedness - Planning, training, surveillance, communications and readiness.

Increased risk - Heightened awareness, local risk assessment and increased surveillance.

Incursion response - Activate regional coordination, apply controls and follow lead-agency direction.

Long-term management - Adapt monitoring, operating practices and game-bird management.

Immediate safety and reporting

- Do not touch sick or dead birds unless authorised and appropriately protected.
- Report unusual sickness or deaths to MPI on 0800 80 99 66.
- Follow current MPI, DOC and Health New Zealand guidance and task-specific PPE requirements.
- Keep people and dogs away from affected birds and potentially contaminated areas.

Operating priorities

- People first.
- Follow lead-agency advice.
- Protect game-bird populations.
- Communicate clearly.
- Review as risk changes.

3. Recommendations

For information, discussion and feedback from Council.

Eastern Fish and Game HPAI Regional Action Plan

Version 3 Draft

Eastern Fish and Game Council



September 2026

For Council review

Document Control

Field	Detail
Document owner	Chief Executive, Eastern Fish and Game Council
Version	V3 Draft
Prepared	September 2026
Approval authority	Eastern Fish and Game Council
Review frequency	At least quarterly and or whenever a review trigger occurs
Controlled document	The current approved electronic version takes precedence over printed copies

Approval

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Chief Executive	Arash Alaeinia		
Council Chair	Lindsay Lyons		

Review Triggers

This plan must be reviewed following any of the following:

- a change in MPI's national or regional H5 risk assessment or official guidance
- a confirmed or suspected HPAI event in the Eastern Region
- a material change to Fish and Game national policy, DOC guidance or Health New Zealand workplace guidance
- an incident, exposure, exercise or response that identifies a weakness in the plan
- a material organisational, legislative, funding or operational change
- the annual scheduled review.

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- Appendix 2 PPE guide
- Appendix 3 Incident contacts and references

1. Purpose and Scope

This plan sets out how Eastern Fish and Game Council will prepare for, respond to and manage the regional implications of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1. It translates national direction into practical regional arrangements while retaining Eastern's statutory responsibilities, local knowledge and duties as a person conducting a business or undertaking under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

The plan applies to Eastern employees, honorary rangers, contractors and volunteers, and guides communication with licence holders, game bird hunters and regional partners. It covers staff safety, game bird management, surveillance, reporting, communications, banding, botulism work, sampling, permits and business continuity.

Eastern is not a first-response disease-control agency. Its role is to provide game bird expertise, regional intelligence, licence-holder communication and agreed support to the lead agencies within Eastern's region functions, capability and approved resources.

2. Current Situation

As at 16 September 2026, H5N1 avian influenza **clade 2.3.4.4b** has been detected in New Zealand through three initial detections in the Wellington Region. No further detections have been reported since those initial cases, and MPI currently assesses the entire country as low risk. No game bird species have been reported as positive at the date of this plan, and normal game bird hunting continues with sensible precautions.

The situation can change quickly. Before any bird-handling, banding, sampling or botulism activity, the activity leader must check MPI's current H5 risk-level map and monitoring map, **confirm any DOC or national Fish and Game direction, and complete a task-specific risk assessment.**

Current maps: [MPI H5 bird flu risk levels](#) and [MPI monitoring locations](#)

3. Principles and Role Boundaries

- MPI is the lead agency for HPAI in animals, including national surveillance, testing, movement controls and disease-response direction.
- Health New Zealand and the public health service lead human-health assessment, exposure management and public-health advice, with the Ministry of Health providing national system leadership as applicable.
- Eastern supports, but does not replace, the responsibilities of MPI, DOC, councils, landowners, poultry operators or emergency-management agencies.
- Eastern retains authority and accountability for the health and safety of its workers and for regional operational decisions within its statutory functions.
- National consistency is supported through common messages, technical advice and minimum standards, while regional action remains proportionate to local risk, capability and legal authority.
- No activity involving additional staffing, clean-up, sampling, equipment, PPE or other material cost will be accepted without clear authority, scope, capability, funding and responsibility.
- Restrictions or interventions must be lawful, evidence based, proportionate, geographically targeted and regularly reviewed.

4. Governance and Decision Making

4.1 Agency Roles

Agency	Primary role
MPI Biosecurity New Zealand	Lead animal-disease agency; national risk assessment, surveillance, testing, response controls and technical direction.
Health New Zealand and Public Health	Human-health risk assessment, exposure advice, monitoring and medical/public-health response.
Department of Conservation	Management of wildlife and HPAI activity on public conservation land; technical guidance for wildlife handling and banding.
New Zealand Fish and Game Council	National coordination, consistent national communications, technical liaison and support to regions.
Eastern Fish and Game Council	Regional game bird expertise, surveillance and reporting support, hunter communications, statutory game bird decisions, field intelligence and worker safety.
Regional and territorial authorities	Responsibilities for council land, public spaces, waste and local coordination within their statutory functions.
Landowners and occupiers	Management of their land and implementation of MPI or public-health directions.
Iwi and hapu	Regional partnership, local knowledge, taonga-species interests and advice on customary and cultural implications.

4.2 Eastern Incident Coordination Team

The Chief Executive activates the Eastern Incident Coordination Team when regional coordination is required. Activation may occur because of an MPI request, a change in local risk, a suspected or confirmed Eastern detection, or a material effect on Eastern operations.

Role	Responsibility
Chief Executive or delegate	Incident lead; approves operational posture, staffing, expenditure, external commitments and regional communications.
Technical lead	Assesses game bird and field implications; liaises with MPI, DOC and the national technical group.
Health and safety lead	Completes or verifies risk assessments, PPE controls, training, exposure response and worker consultation.
Communications lead	Coordinates accurate and timely information for staff, Council, licence holders, iwi, partners and media.
Administration and records	Maintains decisions, situation reports, contacts, costs, contracts, incident records and review actions.

4.3 Decision Authority

Decision	Authority
Eastern operational activation level	Chief Executive or formally delegated manager
Worker deployment and PPE requirements	Chief Executive or delegated manager following task-specific H&S assessment
Public and licence-holder regional communications	Chief Executive or authorised communications lead, aligned with verified national information
Game bird permit decision	Eastern's authorised statutory decision-maker under the applicable delegation

Decision	Authority
Regional hunting regulation proposal or closure	Eastern Council and other statutory authorities as required by law
Acceptance of externally funded sampling or response work	Chief Executive, subject to an approved written agreement and available capability

5. Regional Operating Levels

National disease status does not automatically determine Eastern's full operational response. The Chief Executive will set Eastern's operating level using MPI's risk map, local detections, the activity proposed, agency advice, worker exposure and regional consequences.

Eastern level	Trigger	Regional posture
Level 1 Routine vigilance	MPI risk is low and there is no active Eastern outbreak.	Routine operations continue with hygiene, reporting, current communications and task-specific controls. Banding and botulism activity may proceed if approved.
Level 2 Heightened readiness	MPI risk rises to medium, detections approach the region, or credible local concerns require increased readiness.	Increase surveillance and communications; review field work, PPE, staffing and business continuity; limit higher-exposure activity and prepare for restrictions.
Level 3 Local response	MPI risk is high, HPAI is suspected or confirmed in the Eastern Region, or MPI requests formal regional response support.	Activate the Incident Coordination Team; suspend or modify affected activity; apply enhanced biosecurity and PPE; issue immediate regional advice; coordinate with lead agencies.
Level 4 Long-term management	HPAI is established or recurring and requires continuing adaptation.	Embed ongoing biosecurity, surveillance, population monitoring, adaptive harvest management, local restrictions where justified, and recovery planning.

6. Preparedness

While operating at Level 1, Eastern will maintain practical readiness rather than waiting for a national escalation. The following minimum arrangements apply:

- maintain current relationships with MPI, DOC, councils, Public Health, iwi and the Bay of Plenty HPAI coordination network
- maintain a role-based contact register, reviewed at least quarterly
- ensure workers who may handle birds understand symptoms, reporting, hygiene, PPE, disinfection and exposure procedures
- maintain sufficient Level 1 PPE and cleaning supplies for planned regional activity, with access arrangements for higher-level PPE
- identify staff who may require respiratory protection and maintain fit-testing records where appropriate
- maintain pre-approved hunter, staff, Council and stakeholder communications
- maintain a list of high-use wetlands and bird-congregation sites to support targeted observation
- review the effect of possible activity restrictions on compliance, licensing, monitoring and financial sustainability
- exercise this plan at least annually.

7. Surveillance and Reporting

7.1 Eastern Surveillance Role

Eastern contributes to passive surveillance through observations by staff, honorary rangers, hunters and regional partners. Eastern may undertake active sampling only under an approved programme and written agreement with MPI or another authorised lead agency.

Priority observations include unusual mortality, neurological signs, inability to fly or stand, respiratory distress, birds swimming in circles, twisted necks and several birds sick or dead in the same place. Similar symptoms can occur with botulism; staff must report and await advice rather than diagnose the cause.

7.2 Public and Field Reporting

If three or more sick or dead wild birds are found together:

- do not touch, collect or move them
- keep people and dogs away
- record the location, preferably by GPS, species if known, number affected and safe photographs or video
- immediately call Biosecurity New Zealand's Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline on 0800 80 99 66 or report online at report.mpi.govt.nz
- notify the Eastern manager and record the event
- follow MPI, DOC and public-health instructions.

8 Health and Safety

Eastern will eliminate exposure to suspected HPAI so far as is reasonably practicable. Where exposure cannot be eliminated, it will be minimised through task selection, separation, trained personnel, safe systems of work, suitable PPE, hygiene, disinfection, supervision and exposure management.

8.1 Pre-activity Requirements

1. Check the current MPI risk-level map on the day of the activity.
2. Confirm whether HPAI has been detected or is suspected at or near the site.
3. Define the activity and likely contact with healthy, sick or dead birds, droppings, water, equipment or contaminated material.
4. Complete and approve a task-specific risk assessment and field plan.
5. Confirm required PPE, trained personnel, fit-testing status, clean and dirty zones, disinfection, waste arrangements and emergency communications.
6. Stop or postpone the activity if controls, competence, staffing or equipment are not adequate.

8.2 Respiratory Protection

P2 or N95 negative-pressure respirators must be fit tested before use. Facial hair that crosses the respirator seal prevents an effective fit. A suitable loose-fitting powered air-purifying respirator may be considered for a person who cannot be fit tested, but only following a task-specific assessment, training and confirmation that the equipment is appropriate, available, maintained and able to be safely decontaminated.

8.3 Exposure or PPE Breach

1. Stop work and leave the contaminated area using the approved doffing route.

2. Wash exposed skin with soap and water and flush exposed eyes with clean water.
3. Notify the manager and health and safety lead immediately and record the event.
4. Contact the local public health service or obtain medical advice as directed.
5. Follow any advice on symptom monitoring, isolation, testing or antiviral medication.
6. A person who develops influenza-like symptoms within 14 days of exposure must isolate as much as possible, notify Eastern and seek medical assessment instructions.

8.4 Cleaning Waste and Site Separation

Field work involving birds must establish separate clean and dirty areas. Reusable equipment must be cleaned to remove visible material and then disinfected using a product effective against influenza viruses, following the manufacturer's concentration and contact time. Disposable PPE and contaminated material must be contained and disposed of according to the assessed risk and any MPI, public-health or waste-provider direction. Level 3 waste may be controlled waste and must not enter the ordinary waste stream without approval.

9. Duck Banding

Duck banding may proceed where MPI identifies the area as low risk, DOC guidance permits the activity, no concerning mortality or illness is present, and Eastern's task-specific assessment confirms that the work can be completed safely. The activity leader must check the risk map immediately before field deployment and again if circumstances change.

Local risk	Banding position	Minimum approach
Low	May proceed with CE or delegated manager approval.	Level 1 PPE, normal banding controls, hygiene and disinfection. Volunteers may participate if trained, supervised and covered by the risk assessment.
Medium	Normally restrict or postpone; proceed only where justified and expressly approved.	At least Level 2 PPE and fit-tested respiratory protection. Volunteers would normally be excluded unless individually assessed, trained and appropriately equipped.
High or local HPAI concern	Suspend unless MPI or DOC specifically requests an essential activity and Eastern approves it.	Level 3 PPE and specialist controls. No routine volunteer participation.

Banding must stop immediately if sick or dead birds, unusual behaviour, unexpected mortality, a PPE failure or a change in the mapped risk level is identified. Birds must not be aggregated merely to continue a programme where the health risk has changed.

10. Botulism Response

Botulism and HPAI can present with similar signs. Before any clean-up, staff must report the event, check the MPI risk map, seek agency advice where appropriate and complete a site-specific assessment. Eastern will not assume responsibility for carcass removal on land managed by another organisation.

Local risk	Eastern position	PPE
Low	Botulism response may proceed where it falls within Eastern's role and site responsibilities are agreed.	Level 1 PPE as the minimum, plus any additional controls required by the task assessment.

Local risk	Eastern position	PPE
Medium	Undertake only where necessary, roles are clear and the CE or delegate approves the work.	Level 3 PPE under the current national operational crosswalk.
High or confirmed local outbreak	Do not undertake routine clean-up. Act only under MPI direction and an approved response arrangement.	Level 3 PPE and specialist response controls.

11. MPI Sampling

MPI may contract Fish and Game regions to collect samples at modelled surveillance locations. Eastern is not currently identified as one of the five primary 2026 sampling locations but may be approached as a backup or for future work.

Eastern will participate only where a written agreement specifies:

- the purpose, method, sites, timing and sample numbers
- the respective responsibilities of MPI, NZC and Eastern
- required competence, training, PPE, fit testing and health monitoring
- funding for staff time, travel, consumables, equipment, waste and administration
- sample custody, transport, data ownership and reporting
- insurance, liability, incident and exposure arrangements
- Eastern's right to pause or stop work if risk, capacity or conditions change.

12. Game Bird Management and Permits

12.1 Harvest and Activity Management

Normal game bird hunting continues unless a lawful restriction applies. Eastern may consider targeted changes to banding, releases, monitoring, access, harvest settings or hunting activity where supported by evidence and within its statutory authority. Any restriction should be proportionate, geographically targeted, time limited where possible and reviewed against current evidence.

12.2 Disturbance and Culling Permits

MPI advises that culling wild birds will not stop the spread of H5 bird flu and has not imposed additional H5-specific permissions for wild-bird culling. Existing legislation and permitting requirements continue to apply, and Eastern remains the permitting authority for game birds within its lawful jurisdiction.

Applications from poultry farms to disturb or cull game birds for H5 risk reduction will be considered case by case. Preventative disturbance permits should be limited to poultry-farm circumstances and use an escalating hierarchy of deterrence. An applicant should demonstrate the problem, non-lethal measures attempted, proposed method, animal-welfare controls, operator competence, monitoring and reporting.

Issuing a permit does not commit Eastern staff to undertake disturbance, culling, carcass collection, clean-up or poultry-farm operations. Any separate operational support requires a written agreement, risk assessment, defined funding, appropriate capability and Chief Executive approval.

13. Communications and Engagement

Eastern will use verified MPI, DOC, Health New Zealand and national Fish and Game information while retaining the ability to issue timely regional operational advice. The Chief Executive or authorised communications lead approves Eastern public statements.

Core public messages are:

- keep away from sick or dead birds and keep children and dogs away
- report three or more sick or dead birds to MPI on 0800 80 99 66 or report.mpi.govt.nz
- do not harvest, handle or eat birds that appear sick or were found dead
- only collect birds that the hunter has shot
- wash and dry hands after handling birds and do not eat, drink or smoke while dressing them
- clean boots, boats, vehicles, equipment and dog gear between sites
- cook game birds thoroughly to an internal temperature of at least 75 degrees Celsius
- follow any temporary local controls or closures.

Engagement with iwi and hapu will recognise taonga species, customary interests, local knowledge and the implications of any proposed restriction or intervention. Eastern will also keep its Council, workers, honorary rangers, hunting clubs, land managers and regional partners appropriately informed.

14. Office and Public Contact Procedure

Sick or dead birds must not be brought into an Eastern office or facility. If a member of the public arrives with a bird or contaminated container:

1. ask the person to remain outside and keep other people and animals away
2. do not accept, open, handle or move the bird unless MPI expressly directs otherwise
3. provide the MPI reporting number and assist with a report if needed
4. if staff contact is unavoidable, use the PPE required by the task-specific assessment and follow MPI instructions
5. if MPI directs temporary containment, use leak-proof containment and triple-bagging only as instructed; label and isolate the item outdoors in a secure location
6. clean and disinfect any contaminated footwear, surfaces or equipment; isolate the affected area until cleaning is complete
7. notify the manager and record the incident and any exposure.

15. Business Continuity and Recovery

The Incident Coordination Team will assess effects on worker availability, field programmes, compliance, licence-holder services, monitoring, hatchery operations, contractors, revenue and public confidence. Critical functions and delegations must be maintained while non-essential exposed activity may be deferred.

If HPAI becomes established, Eastern will move from short-term response to adaptive management. This may include permanent field hygiene, continuing surveillance, population-impact monitoring, modified harvest settings, targeted local restrictions, alternative non-contact monitoring methods and financial recovery planning.

16. Training Records and Review

Eastern will maintain records of HPAI induction, task training, PPE training, respirator fit testing, exercises, field risk assessments, exposures, incidents, decisions, costs and corrective actions. Initial and refresher training will be appropriate to the activities personnel may undertake.

After any activation, exercise, exposure or material activity, the Chief Executive will ensure a short debrief is completed and agreed improvements are assigned, dated and incorporated into this plan or its supporting procedures.

Appendix 1 Operational Activation Checklist

Check	Required action	Complete
1	Confirm MPI national and local risk status and any detection near the proposed activity.	[]
2	Confirm the Eastern operating level and decision-maker.	[]
3	Define Eastern's role and confirm that another agency's responsibility is not being assumed.	[]
4	Complete the task-specific risk assessment and field plan.	[]
5	Confirm competent personnel, volunteer status and supervision.	[]
6	Confirm PPE level, stock, fit-testing and donning and doffing arrangements.	[]
7	Confirm clean and dirty zones, hygiene, disinfection, waste and laundry arrangements.	[]
8	Confirm communications, lone-worker arrangements and emergency contacts.	[]
9	Confirm authority, funding, contract and liability for externally requested work.	[]
10	Brief all participants and record attendance.	[]
11	Set stop-work criteria and the person authorised to stop the activity.	[]
12	Complete post-activity cleaning, records and debrief.	[]

Appendix 2 PPE Guide

This guide summarises the September 2026 operational position. It does not replace the current MPI map, Health New Zealand guidance, DOC activity guidance or Eastern's task-specific risk assessment. Where requirements differ, the more protective requirement applies until the discrepancy is resolved.

PPE level	Minimum elements
Level 0	Business-as-usual hygiene. Wash hands, arms and face with water and detergent after fieldwork and apply hand sanitiser.
Level 1	Level 0 plus nitrile gloves, closed waterproof footwear, clothing change, and cleaning and disinfection of clothing and footwear before reuse.
Level 2	Level 1 plus enhanced biosecurity, a fit-tested P2 or N95 respirator, protective eyewear and protective clothing such as fluid-resistant coveralls.
Level 3	Level 2 plus two layers of nitrile gloves; full-body Category III Type 4 or 5/6 splashproof coveralls; disposable impermeable apron; hood or hair cover; fit-tested P2 or N95 respiratory protection or an assessed powered-air alternative; no gap between gloves and sleeves.

Current Activity Crosswalk

MPI area risk	Banding	Botulism clean-up	Suspected or confirmed HPAI response
Low	Level 1	Level 1	Not routine; follow MPI direction and task assessment
Medium	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3
High	Normally suspend; Level 3 if essential and approved	Level 3	Level 3

Appendix 3 Incident Contacts and References

Contact	Details
MPI Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline	0800 80 99 66
MPI online reporting	https://report.mpi.govt.nz
New Zealand Fish and Game technical contact	Adam Daniel 022 030 9033
Eastern incident lead	Chief Executive or delegated manager - refer to controlled contact register
Local public health service	Refer to the controlled contact register and current Health New Zealand advice
Regional agency and iwi contacts	Refer to Eastern's controlled HPAI contact register
Local council Biosecurity officers:	Name(s): Bay of Plenty Regional Council: Shane Grayling 021 673702 Hamish Lass 021 8559664 Greg Corbett 029 3687571 Waikato Regional Council: Andrew Thomas 021 482675 Tauranga City Council: Paul Greenshields 027 2666238 Western Bay of Plenty District Council: Peter Watson 0274 902543 Gisborne District Council Phillip Karaitiana phillip.karaitiana@gdc.govt.nz Amy England 06 8672049 amy.england@gdc.govt.nz MPI: Sean Newland 027 233 9516 Sean.Newland@mpi.govt.nz BOPRC 0800 884 880 Ministry for Primary Industries: 0800 809 966 Ministry of Health: 0800 400 569
Communication officers:	Name(s): Bay of Plenty Regional Council – Biosecurity comms is Melissa Williams Melissa.Williams@boprc.govt.nz Comms and Engagement Manager is Angela Foster angela.foster@boprc.govt.nz Western Bay of Plenty District Council – Luke Balvert luke.balvert@westernbay.govt.nz Whakatāne District Council – Liz Taylor liz.taylor@whakatane.govt.nz Kawerau District Council - Manager communications and engagement - Tania Humberstone Tania.Humberstone@kaweraudc.govt.nz Rotorua Lakes Council – Ingrid Tiriana Ingrid.tiriana@rotorualc.nz Ōpōtiki District Council – Abby Tozer AbbyT@odc.govt.nz and Holly Watene hollyw@odc.govt.nz Tauranga City Council – Ben Free Ben.Free@tauranga.govt.nz Kayce.Henderson@tauranga.govt.nz and Sarah.Matenga@tauranga.govt.nz BOPRC 0800 884 880 Ministry for Primary Industries: 0800 809 966 Ministry of Health: 0800 400 569

Contact	Details
DOC Contacts:	Name(s): Tauranga Karl McCarthy: 0275366837 kmccarthy@doc.govt.nz John Heaphy: 0275366836 jheaphy@doc.govt.nz Gisborne Matt Tong – 027 221 9779 mtong@doc.govt.nz Whakarae Henare - 027 591 6053 - whenare@doc.govt.nz Sheree Smith - 027 251 7921 – shsmith@doc.govt.nz Rotorua Bex Newland - 027 578 0985 rnewland@doc.govt.nz Zak Browne - 027 316 7836 zbrowne@doc.govt.nz Whakatane Kirsty Brown - 027 216 3991 kirbrown@doc.govt.nz Sam Haultain shaultain@doc.govt.nz Taupo Rachel Abbott rabbott@doc.govt.nz Regional oversight lead Teresa McCauley tmccauley@doc.govt.nz BOPRC 0800 884 880 Ministry for Primary Industries: 0800 809 966 Ministry of Health: 0800 400 569
Waste disposal company For stages 1 and 2 preparedness. During stage 3, a nationwide response may be in place – MPI lead	EnviroNZ Enviro NZ Hazardous and Liquid Contact details: 0800 240 120 (24 hrs) (07) 541 0600 (0800-1700) Waste Management 0800 10 10 10 orders@wm.nz Tairāwhiti-Gisborne Regional Animal Welfare Emergency Management Plan (mpi.govt.nz)

Key References

- [MPI H5 bird flu risk-level map](#)
- [MPI H5 monitoring locations map](#)
- [Health New Zealand Avian Influenza Health and Safety Guidance for Workplaces](#)
- [Fish and Game H5 bird flu information](#)
- [MPI H5 bird flu information](#)

11. 2026-2027 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

Ref: 8.02.01

23 September 2026

1. Purpose

Final approval of Eastern's Operational Work Plan (OWP) for 2026-27, confirming budget confirmations following the late August New Zealand Fish and Game Council (NZFGC) meeting.

2. Background

Following the August NZFGC meeting, regional budgets, reserve spending and levies were confirmed and communication of this was sent to the regions dated 18 September but sent on 22 September 2026 (attached).

Unfortunately, there were a number of errors not only for Eastern but other regions too in the final confirmation and communication.

In Eastern's letter to NZFGC dated 26 June following their budget recommendations supplied on the 22 June and Eastern's Extra Ordinary meeting to supply NZC with its recommendations, Eastern Council approved 'Plan A' the 2.3% reduction of our base budget with the shortfall of **\$30,778** to be taken from the regions reserves. This has not been acknowledged in the 18 September communication.

Point 8, paragraph 4 & 5 state the approval of regions to use their reserves to top up the short fall and states the regions that applied, but Eastern has been omitted.

"Following Meeting 183, the NZC also approved the adoption of Plan A, which also specified that those regions that wished to top up their budgets to the 2025/26 amount from reserves could do so.

So far, NZC has received the following reserve spend from Regions for 2026/27: Northland \$48,006, Taranaki \$10,086, Wellington \$20,001, Otago \$318,000, Southland \$68,430, these were approved in advance at Meeting 183. "

Additionally, table 6 states our approved funding from reserves as being \$46,376, however our letter dated 26 June confirms this as being increased by \$3,000 from the Non-Resident reserve to **\$49,376**;

"Eastern Fish and Game Council also agreed to reconfirm the proposed use of regional reserves for "one off" expenditure proposed for the 2026-27 year of \$46,376 and approves the additional drawdown of \$3,000 from the Non-resident reserve for the Te Wairoa Trap gate repairs/replacement bringing the total "one off" draw from reserves to \$49,376."

5. Recommendations

That Eastern Council acknowledges errors identified in the NZFGC communication and confirms the use of its reserves in accordance with the information submitted the NZFGC.

1 of 9



CONFIRMATION:	BUDGET AND LICENCE FEES AND LEVY'S/GRANTS 2026/27
TO:	Regional Chairs
CC:	Regional Managers, NZC and Administrators
AUTHOR:	NZ Fish and Game Council
DATE:	18/09/2026

1. Background

All budgets were presented to the New Zealand Council (NZC) at Meeting 181 on 10 & 11 April 2026.

The Meeting 181 budget had a \$1.6m shortfall. After much discussion on potential options, NZC proposed to address this through the following approach to determining the levy that is paid: a \$5 licence fee increase, 6.5% from reserves, 2.88% pro-rata licence fees excluding those whose budgets decreased or increased by less than 1% from last year (Northland, Taranaki, Wellington, West Coast, Otago). If regions did not agree with the approach, they were asked to provide their view on the way ahead to manage the shortfall.

At Meeting 182, the feedback from the regions was considered, along with updated budgets provided by the regions. The revised total budget for Fish & Game was \$14,336,535.

To meet this budget, the licence fee increase we would be asking for would be close to a \$20 increase for both fishing and game bird hunting licences. If NZC went back to its 2024/25 budget, this would take approx \$8 off that \$20 licence fee increase, leaving a \$12 increase still required to balance the books.

The NZC considered this and, on reflection, considered that asking for this amount of an increase from the Minister would not be achievable and would also be too much to ask of licence holders in this fiscally constrained environment.

There was no consensus on the proposed licence fee increase provided by the regions; NZC considered the feedback and given the lack of consensus, the NZC resolved to seek further consultation on two new plans to address the budget deficit.

Due to the legislative timeline around the setting of licence fees and types, this feedback was conducted rapidly.

The Options presented to regions were:

Plan A

The New Zealand Fish and Game Council:

1. Agree to use the 2025/26 base budget with a reduction of 2.3% across all budgets for 2026- 2027 bulk funding from licence income;
2. Agree to request a \$2 licence fee increase from the Minister; and
3. Agree to pre-approval for regions to use reserves to top up to the approved 2025/26 base budget for 2026-2027.

Plan B

The New Zealand Fish and Game Council:

1. Agree to use the 2025/26 base budget with a reduction of 3.7% across all budgets if a licence fee increase is not approved, and
2. Agree to pre-approval for regions to use reserves to top up to the approved 2025/26 base budget.

The feedback from all regions is displayed below:

Region	Support for Plan A	Support for Plan B
<i>Northland</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Auckland Waikato</i>	No	No
<i>Eastern</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Hawkes Bay</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Taranaki</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Wellington</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Nelson Marlborough</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>West Coast</i>	No	Yes
<i>North Canterbury</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Central South Island</i>	No	No
<i>Otago</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Southland</i>	Yes	

The NZC assessed the additional regional feedback at Meeting 183 (held online on 30 June 2026) before confirming their decision to support Plan A and submit to the Minister a recommendation for a \$2 licence fee increase, coupled with a reversion to the previous years' budgets (2025/26 FY), combined with a 2.3% reduction in those budgets.

Following the approved path forward agreed by NZC at Meeting 183, supported by 10 of the 12 regions, NZC submitted our budgets to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing as part of the Sports Fish Licence Fees and Forms 2026 submission.

In approving this submission, the Minister therefore approved the regional and the NZC budgets, which he did on 14 July 2026.

Following receipt of the Minister's approval, this budget was then confirmed by NZC at Meeting 184.

The approved 2026/27 Licence fees are \$158 (fish) and \$113 (game) plus a \$5 Game Bird Habitat Stamp fee (total \$118 for game).

2. Overall Position 2026/27

Table 1 gives an overall summary of the forecast position for Fish and Game for 2026/27 with a budgeted deficit of \$4362 (last year's budget deficit of \$67,562).

The Deficit is contained by reverting to previous years' budgets and the 2.3% cuts made to those budgets, plus the successful application for a \$2 licence fee increase.

Table 1: Overall Forecast Position for Fish and Game	
Based on Fish \$158 & Game \$118	
For the Year ended 31 August 2027	
Net Licence Sales	12,312,551
Includes \$2 Licence Fee increase	170,107
Total Income	12,312,551
Less Approved Budget	12,316,913
Total Surplus/(Deficit)	(4,362)

3. Licence Forecast LEQ 2026/27

The total forecast for Fish Licences is 71,915 (last year 72,975) LEQ and Game 29,972 (last year 30,601) LEQ.

Table 2: Licence Forecast LEQ 2026/27	Budget 24/25		Budget 25/26		Budget 26/27	
	Fish	Game	Fish	Game	Fish	Game
Northland	454	1,537	618	1,506	631	1,562
Auckland/Waikato	3,658	6,518	3,838	6,436	3,956	6,090
Eastern	8,363	2,769	9,005	2,567	8,633	2,838
Hawkes Bay	2,240	1,667	3,010	1,888	2,865	1,714
Taranaki	964	1,072	1,217	950	1,337	1,066
Wellington	2,989	3,231	2,846	3,214	2,707	3,199
Nelson-Marlb	4,341	843	4,136	844	3,896	893
Nth Canterbury	10,904	2,557	10,180	2,576	9,645	2,432
West Coast	2,127	361	2,200	363	2,026	342
Central SI	12,331	2,267	12,366	1,914	12,338	2,243
Otago	15,410	3,944	15,479	3,923	15,682	4,291

Southland	8,595	4,574	8,080	4,420	8,199	3,303
NZC only						
National						
TOTAL	72,376	31,340	72,975	30,601	71,915	29,972

4. Licence Forecast 2026/27

The total Licence forecast is \$12,825,574 as per Table 3. This forecast is based on the Licence fee for Fish Licences being \$158 inclusive of GST for an Adult whole season, and for Game, the Adult whole season Licence to be \$118 inclusive of GST and the GBHT stamp levy (\$5).

The Cost of Sales (COS) \$513,023 is Agent commission plus bank fees (including credit card and processing fees) on Public online sales. This is budgeted at 4.0 % of Licence Income

Net Licence Income is Forecast for the 2026/27 year to be \$12,312,551.

Table 3: Total Income Summary 2026/27									
	Fish Licence Income \$			Game Licence Income \$			TOTAL Licence Income \$		
	Fish \$	COS \$	Net Fish \$	Game \$	COS \$	Net Game \$	TOTAL F & G	Total COS \$	Net Licence Income \$
Northland	86,694	3,468	83,226	153,483	6,139	147,344	240,177	9,607	230,570
Auckland/Waikato	543,520	21,741	521,779	598,409	23,936	574,472	1,141,929	45,677	1,096,252
Eastern	1,186,135	47,445	1,138,690	278,864	11,155	267,710	1,465,000	58,600	1,406,400
Hawkes Bay	393,649	15,746	377,903	168,419	6,737	161,682	562,068	22,483	539,585
Taranaki	183,692	7,348	176,344	104,746	4,190	100,556	288,438	11,538	276,901
Wellington	371,922	14,877	357,045	314,287	12,571	301,716	686,209	27,448	658,761
Nelson-Marib	535,231	21,409	513,822	87,747	3,510	84,237	622,978	24,919	598,059
Nth Canterbury	1,325,145	53,006	1,272,139	238,921	9,557	229,364	1,564,067	62,563	1,501,504
West Coast	278,369	11,135	267,234	33,605	1,344	32,261	311,974	12,479	299,495
Central BI	1,695,156	67,806	1,627,350	220,399	8,816	211,583	1,915,556	76,622	1,838,933
Otago	2,154,570	86,183	2,068,388	421,637	16,865	404,772	2,576,208	103,048	2,473,160
Southland	1,126,415	45,057	1,081,359	324,556	12,982	311,573	1,450,971	58,039	1,392,932
NZC only									
National									
TOTAL	9,880,499	395,220	9,485,279	2,945,075	117,803	2,827,272	12,825,574	513,023	12,312,551

5. Net Licence, and Non-Licence and Interest Income 2026/27

In addition to Licence income, all Councils receive income from interest on their reserves and non-licence income. The forecast interest is based on the reserves held at the end of the last financial year and calculated using forecast interest rates. The forecast interest for the 2026/27 year is \$243,339 (last yr \$200,544).

Total Net income for the 2026/27 year is forecast at \$13,5713,940

Table 4: Net Income Summary 2026/27				
	Net Licence Income	Interest	Non-Licence Income	Net Income
Northland	230,570	9,197	12,800	252,568
Auckland/Waikato	1,096,252	0	359,000	1,455,252
Eastern	1,406,400	21,787	209,500	1,637,687

Hawkes Bay	539,585	17,571	41,450	598,606
Taranaki	276,901	9,898	9,633	296,432
Wellington	658,761	12,864	85,620	757,245
Nelson-Marlb	598,059	7,561	105,000	710,620
Nth Canterbury	1,501,504	7,019	0	1,508,523
West Coast	299,495	5,902	52,530	357,927
Central SI	1,838,933	27,067	38,317	1,904,317
Otago	2,473,160	76,375	6,600	2,556,134
Southland	1,392,932	16,409	85,600	1,494,941
NZC only	0	31,688	12,000	43,688
National	0	0	140,000	140,000
TOTAL	12,312,551	243,339	1,158,050	13,713,940

6. National Approved Budget – Base Funds 2026/27

The Total Approved budget for Fish and Game is \$12,312,550. The table below gives a breakdown by Council.

Table 5: Base Funds 2026 27 with 2.3% cut & \$2 fee increase							
National Budget	Approved funding from licence Fee 2025/26	Proposed Expenditure 2026/27	Less 2.3% adjustment to budget	Funding requirement from Licence fee	plus \$2 licence fee increase	Licence income	Surplus / Shortfall 26/27
Northland	606,883	606,883	13,958	592,925	3,661	230,570	(362,354)
Auckland\Waikato	903,870	903,870	20,789	883,081	16,772	1,096,252	213,171
Eastern	1,338,183	1,338,183	30,778	1,307,405	19,152	1,406,400	98,995
Hawkes Bay	445,490	445,490	10,246	435,244	7,645	539,585	104,341
Taranaki	438,511	438,511	10,086	428,425	4,012	276,901	(151,525)
Wellington	869,598	869,598	20,001	849,597	9,860	658,761	(190,836)
Nelson-Marlb	578,228	578,228	13,299	564,929	7,995	598,059	33,130
Nth Canterbury	1,035,183	1,035,183	23,809	1,011,374	20,163	1,501,504	490,130
West Coast	385,350	385,350	8,863	376,487	3,954	299,495	(76,992)
Central SI	968,866	968,866	22,284	946,582	24,344	1,838,933	892,351
Otago	1,271,992	1,271,992	29,256	1,242,736	33,346	2,473,160	1,230,423
Southland	843,635	843,635	19,404	824,231	19,203	1,392,932	568,701
NZC only	1,312,498	1,312,498	30,187	1,282,311	-	-	(1,282,311)

National inc Research	1,608,584	1,608,584	36,997	1,571,587		-	(1,571,587)
TOTAL	12,606,871	12,606,871	289,958	12,316,913	170,107	12,312,550	(4,362)

7. Levy/Grants and Forecast Surplus/(Deficits)

Table 6 outlines the impact on this and the Levy or Grant per region for the 2026/27 year

Table 6: Levies & Grants 2026-27						
Region	Total Forecast Licence Income	Funding Requests	Approved funding from Reserves	Funding from licence fee after budget cuts	Levy/ Grant	
Northland	230,570	592,925	0	592,925	-	362,354
Auckland\Waikato	1,096,252	883,081	65,200	883,081	213,171	
Eastern	1,406,400	1,307,405	46,376	1,307,405	98,995	
Hawkes Bay	539,585	435,244	0	435,244	104,341	
Taranaki	276,901	428,425	0	428,425	-	151,525
Wellington	658,761	849,597	0	849,597	-	190,836
Nelson-Marlb	598,059	564,929	0	564,929	33,130	
Nth Canterbury	1,501,504	1,011,374	30,000	1,011,374	490,130	
West Coast	299,495	376,487	34,500	376,487	-	76,992
Central SI	1,838,933	946,582	0	946,582	892,351	
Otago	2,473,160	1,242,736	0	1,242,736	1,230,423	
Southland	1,392,932	824,231	0	824,231	568,701	
NZC	-	1,282,311	0	1,282,311	-	1,282,311
National inc RMA & Research	-	1,571,587	0	1,571,587	-	1,571,587
TOTAL	12,312,551	12,316,913	176,076	\$12,316,913		(\$4,362)

8. Spending from Reserves

As a COVID response to the Reserves for each region, the NZC agreed to ensure all regions maintained 20% of their Original Budget in Reserves at year-end (provided the region worked within their Approved Budget).

Note: This assumes all councils work within their Approved Budget and meet all forecasts. Any spending from Reserves requires notification to the NZC – approval to use Reserves will **not** be approved if the use of those Reserves causes a council's Reserves to fall below the 20% threshold.

At Meeting 182 of the NZC, the council resolved to adopt the spending from reserves indicated by the Auckland/Waikato (\$65,200), Eastern (\$46,376), North Canterbury (\$30,000) and West Coast (\$34,500) regions prior to Meeting 182, for a total spend of \$176, 076 from reserves.

Following Meeting 183, the NZC also approved the adoption of Plan A, which also specified that those regions that wished to top up their budgets to the 2025/26 amount from reserves could do so.

So far, NZC has received the following reserve spend from Regions for 2026/27: Northland \$48,006, Taranaki \$10,086, Wellington \$20,001, Otago \$318,000, Southland \$68,430, these were approved in advance at Meeting 183.

9. Regional Fish & Game Councils 2026/27 Levy/Grant Schedule

The levy remittance/grant payment schedule for 2026/27 is attached. As usual, an invoice will be forwarded in the preceding month when the payments are due. If you are receiving a grant, please issue NZC an invoice as per the schedule.

Scenario A: REGIONAL FISH & GAME COUNCILS: 2026/27 LEVY/GRANT SCHEDULE									
Payable to/(by) New Zealand Fish & Game Council (GST Reg. No. 53-332-404)									
	Quarterly Instalment		Payment made/Received				Levy/(Grant)	Total GST	TOTAL
	Levy/(Grant)	GST @15 %	Total	20/11/2025	20/02/2026	20/05/2026	20/08/2026		
Northland	(90,588.60)	(13,588.29)	(104,176.89)					(54,353.16)	(416,707.55)
Akd/Waikato	53,292.64	7,993.90	61,286.54					213,170.56	245,146.14
Eastern	24,748.71	3,712.31	28,461.02					98,994.84	113,844.06
Hawke's Bay	26,085.36	3,912.80	29,998.16					104,341.44	119,992.66
Taranaki	(37,881.13)	(5,682.17)	(43,563.30)					(151,524.52)	(174,253.19)
Wellington	(47,709.06)	(7,156.36)	(54,865.42)					(190,836.26)	(219,461.70)
Nelson/Marlb	8,282.53	1,242.38	9,524.91					33,130.13	38,099.64
Nth Canterbury	122,532.52	18,379.88	140,912.40					490,130.10	563,649.61
West Coast	(19,248.01)	(2,887.20)	(22,135.21)					(76,992.03)	(88,540.83)
CSI	223,087.82	33,463.17	256,550.99					892,351.27	1,026,203.96
Otago	307,605.83	46,140.87	353,746.71					1,230,423.33	1,414,986.83
Southland	142,175.13	21,326.27	163,501.40					568,700.54	654,005.62
	712,383.75	106,857.56	819,241.31					2,849,535.00	3,276,965.25
Levy	907,810.55	136,171.58	1,043,982.13	Total Receipts				3,631,242.20	4,175,928.52
Grant	(195,426.80)	(29,314.02)	(224,740.82)	Total Payments				(781,707.20)	(898,963.28)
Net	712,383.75	106,857.56	819,241.31	Net Receipts				2,849,535.00	3,276,965.25

10. Next Steps

Please now update your OWPs to reconcile with the Approved Budget 2026/27 in the Table 5: National Budget. When your budgets and OWP's have been updated, please send a copy of your final detailed budget to the NZC email nzcouncil@fishandgame.org.nz by **18 September 2026** and copy the Finance team at Leech & Co via Scott Mathieson scott@leech.co.nz in your email.

This will be the budget record against which you will compare actual audited expenditure in the year-end variance report.

Please give Scott a call or email if you have any queries or need assistance in the preparation of your budgets.



26 June 2026

New Zealand Fish and Game Council
By email: nzcouncil@fishandgame.org.nz

Dear New Zealand Fish and Game Council

Feedback on Budget Recommendations #182

Eastern Council convened an Extra Ordinary meeting for the evening of 25 June to discuss the new budget recommendations supplied by NZC late on 22 June evening.

Our Council's recommendation on the proposed pathways are;

Eastern Fish and Game Council supports the proposed;

Plan A

Agree to use the 2025/26 base budget and proposed to fund the shortfall of 2.3% (\$30,778) from the Region's reserves.

Agree to request a \$2 licence fee increase from the Minister

Agree that the shortfall which will be funded through reserves provides for an adjustment to staff salaries of 1.5%.

And supports the proposed Plan B should the minister not support a \$2 licence fee increase:

Plan B

Agree to use the 2025/26 base budget and proposed to fund the shortfall of 3.7% (\$49,299) from the Region's reserves.

Agree that the shortfall which will be funded through reserves provides for an adjustment to staff salaries of 1.5%.

Council additionally agrees to support ***the reduction percentage to the 2025/26 base budget in the previous Plan A and Plan B resolutions may be amended based on final figures.***

Eastern Fish and Game Council also agreed to ***reconfirm the proposed use of regional reserves for "one off" expenditure proposed for the 2026-27 year of \$46,376 and approves the additional drawdown of \$3,000 from the Non-resident reserve for the Te Wairoa Trap gate repairs/replacement bringing the total "one off" draw from reserves to \$49,376.***

Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, game birds and their habitats

Eastern Region

1130 Paradise Valley Rd, Ngongotaha, Private bag 3010, Rotorua 3046, New Zealand. Telephone (07) 357 5501
Email eastern@fishandgame.org.nz www.fishandgame.org.nz



Our Council looks forward to New Zealand Council taking on board the concerns that we and other regions have raised previously in regard to adherence and developing robust policy and procedures, transparency, communication, and appropriate time frames for Council consultation.

Again, we thank you for your work and look forward to working with you and all other regions to secure an efficient, high performing and respected organisation for our licence holders.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lindsay Lyons'.

Lindsay Lyons
Chair – Eastern Fish and Game Council

Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, game birds and their habitats

Eastern Region

1130 Paradise Valley Rd, Ngongotaha, Private bag 3010, Rotorua 3046, New Zealand. Telephone (07) 357 5501
Email eastern@fishandgame.org.nz www.fishandgame.org.nz

12. 2025-2026 DRAFT PERFORMANCE REPORT

Ref: 8.03.04

23 September 2026

1. Purpose

To review the draft Statement of Service Performance report and draft Financial Statements for the 2025-2026 Performance (Annual) Report.

2. Background

- The finalised Performance Report for the 2025-2026 year will be presented to the public annual general meeting to be held on 3 December 2026 as per the requirement of Sections 26W and 26ZD(7) of the Conservation Act 1987.
- The annual Performance Report contains a Statement of Service Performance (SOSP) so that readers can assess the performance of the Council against the targets set out in the 2025-2026 Operational Work Plan (OWP). The Performance Report aligns with the OWP to clearly show actual outcomes against targets identified in the annual work planning process.
- The purpose of this paper is to enable early consideration of the material being developed for inclusion in the Performance Report. A draft of the SOSP has been prepared, along with draft unaudited Financial Statements, and these will have been circulated to Councillors prior to this meeting.

The reports will be revised after Council consideration and feedback from the independent external Auditor then compiled into the final Performance Report. This then needs to be approved at Council's 3 December 2026 meeting held immediately prior to the public annual general meeting where it will be presented to the public.

The draft report is presented separately.

3. Recommendation:

3.1 That Council receives the draft reports comprising the Statement of Service Performance and Financial Statements for the 2025-2026 year, and provides any feedback it might have on the drafts before the Performance Report for the 2025-2026 year is completed.

13. 2027 GAME SEASON CONDITIONS

Ref: 1.07.03

17 September 2026

1. Purpose

To review the 2026 Eastern Game Season Conditions (see Appendix 1) and highlight the 2027 game season issues needing further consideration at Council's December meeting.

2. Introduction

At the August 2025 meeting of the NZFGC a paper was presented/adopted on enacting regulations of the Anglers Notice and Game Bird. The paper notes that the Ministers Office provided advice that regulatory changes should be subject to:

- Evidence based assessments of game bird populations.
- Licence holder preferences and expectations.
- Long-term sustainability outcomes.

This approach is consistent with Eastern's Sports Fish and Game Management Plan.

Council has developed species-specific criteria to guide regulations for mallard and grey duck, paradise shelduck and black swan. Equivalent criteria have not yet been developed for shoveler, pukeko or upland game. However, the sustainability of harvesting these species is considered when season recommendations are developed.

Eastern has traditionally relied on councillors, clubs and other contacts to provide information about hunter preferences. The 2024 Eastern licence-holder satisfaction survey provided some useful information, although game-season preferences were not a primary focus of that survey.

This paper identifies seven matters for initial Council discussion:

1. Highly pathogenic avian influenza.
2. Pond feeding.
3. Release of hand-reared game birds.
4. The special black swan season.
5. The special pukeko season.
6. The closed brown quail season.
7. Harvest criteria for game-bird species.

Council may also identify other matters on which it would like further information before considering the proposed 2027 season.

Game-season conditions are normally considered by Council in December. Staff then refine the recommendations using information from summer monitoring programmes before they are submitted through the national process in January.

3. Matters for Consideration

In addition to any other issues Council might wish to discuss, there are seven topics that require Council's consideration and input for next season as follows:

3.1 *Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)*

The current strain of HPAI or bird flu, has decimated wildlife and domestic poultry throughout the world. So far in New Zealand there have been three birds recorded with a positive test for HPAI.

At the time of writing this report, the disease has not established in our avifauna but may do so at any stage. If it arrives in New Zealand, it could have a significant impact on game bird hunting.

This impact is likely to be two-fold; hunters may decide not to hunt game birds for multiple reasons, and game bird populations may collapse.

Some game bird species may be more vulnerable to the disease than others. We know that mallard and grey duck have a relatively high incidence of low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) in our region as we have been assisting MPI since 2004 in their AI monitoring program.

We have also been working with the University of Queensland in a Genome study to help determine the susceptibility of black swan to HPAI. It appears that black swan are immunologically naive to avian influenza so may be very vulnerable.

Other species that may be highly impacted are paradise shelduck, particularly during wing moult when they congregate in large numbers. We are hoping the relatively high prevalence of LPAI in greylard may confer some immunity to HPAI?

Studies show captive reared pheasant and quail to be highly susceptible to HPAI with mortality rates 80 – 100%. However specific vulnerabilities of California or brown quail are unknown, moreover it is assumed that wild Galliformes will be less likely to contract the disease cf. caged birds.

It is quite possible that the disease may arrive and spread throughout NZ before the next game bird season.

Under section 26Q of the Conservation Act 1987, Fish & Game councils are responsible for managing, maintaining and enhancing game-bird resources in the recreational interests of hunters. This includes assessing and monitoring populations and recommending game-season conditions

If HPAI materially affects game-bird populations, Council may need to consider:

- whether sufficient population information is available to support a season;
- whether hunting remains sustainable for individual species;
- whether season lengths or bag limits should be adjusted;
- how unusual hunter participation or effort should be taken into account; and

- what monitoring information will be available to support decisions.
Council needs to clarify what these legal obligations mean for game bird populations that are stressed, highly stressed, or diminished as a result of HPAI. What are the implications of holding a game bird season? Can a season occur if the status of the population is unknown? Moreover, if we do know the status, at what level is harvest still sustainable especially given that hunter effort will not be normal.

Duck banding may be affected by HPAI-related health and safety requirements or changes in public acceptance. Any reduction in the number of banding sites could reduce the precision of population estimates.

Even if we do continue to band it is likely that the number of band sites will be curtailed reducing the accuracy of our population estimates.

Aerial counts are a possible alternative, but these only tell you if the population is increasing or decreasing (unless the number of transects are vastly increased).

Further, aerial transects can only be flown over small parts of the Eastern Region as the topography does not allow us to fly low enough to count the birds.

These matters will require a coordinated national and regional approach. Council may wish to seek clarification from NZC on how HPAI will be taken into account when developing national game-season recommendations and what information regions will be expected to provide.

3.2 *Pond Feeding*

One of the arguments promulgated against banding is that ducks will congregate and are more likely to spread the disease. This argument is only pertinent in the short term as the disease will inevitably spread everywhere in a matter of time.

Pond feeding is carried out by some hunters in the Eastern Region to entice ducks into their pond. The Wildlife Act 1953 prohibits pond feeding unless it is explicitly provided for (in the Game Gazette Notice). Council may wish to discuss what they want to do if HPAI becomes widespread.

3.3 *Release of hand reared Mallard and Grey Duck*

Captive reared mallard and pheasants that are released into the wild may exacerbate the proliferation of HPAI and run the risk of disease mutation. It is not clear if the permissions office in DoC will cancel existing Authorities to release game birds. In the Eastern Region there are both pheasant and mallard captive release activity.

Council may wish to seek advice from DOC, MPI and NZC on how existing release authorities would be managed during an HPAI outbreak and whether temporary restrictions would be appropriate in higher-risk circumstances.

3.4 *Special Black Swan Season*

A special black swan season has been gazetted for the weekend of 27 March – 4 April 2027 in Area A1 where there is unlimited daily bag limit. The special season

was first proposed in 2018 following rapidly increasing numbers on Tauranga Harbour (Figure 1).

The Western Bay of Plenty Fish and Game Club usually organises a shoot over the special season with the aim of reducing numbers on the harbour but have not had much luck with the weather in recent years. Staff are not aware of much uptake by hunters for the special season.

Council needs to consider whether it wishes to hold another special season in the summer of 2028 and if so, is it supportive of a season lasting 9 days (two weekends + one week).

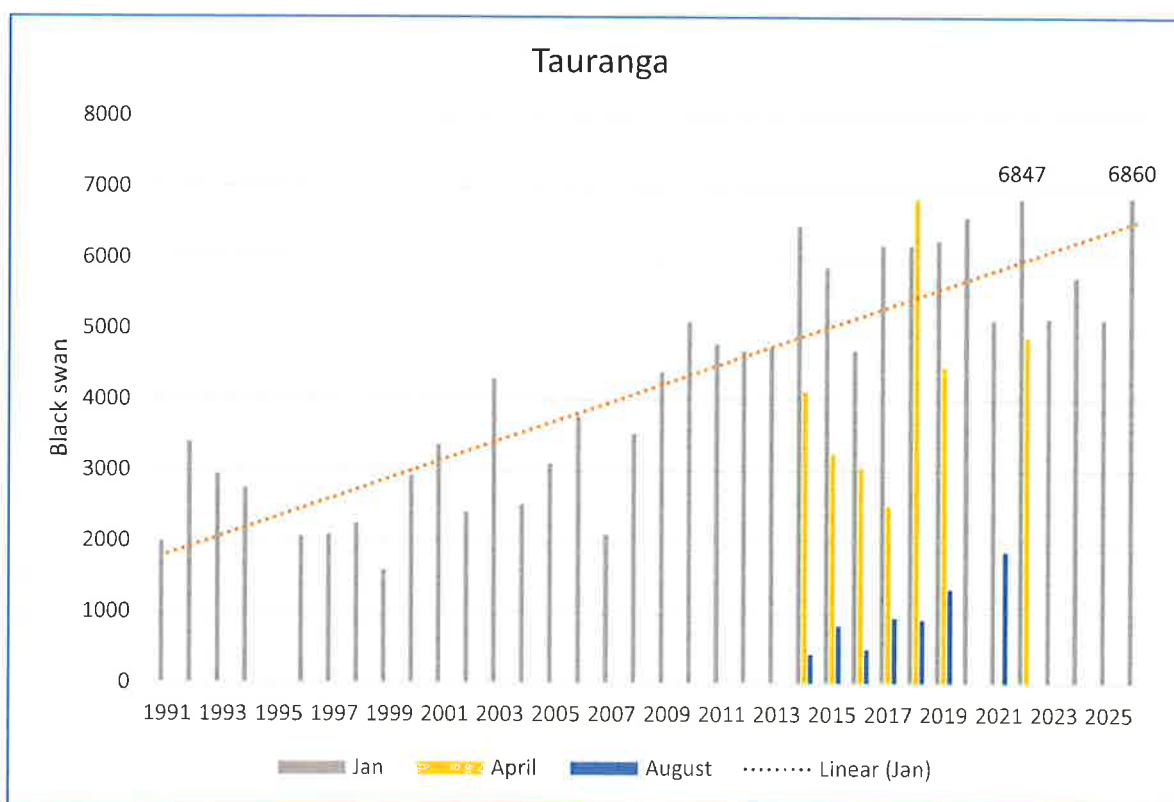


Figure 1. Black swan counts on Tauranga harbour 1991–2026 (grey columns). April and August counts are shown in yellow and blue respectively. Counts are made from a Cessna 172 aircraft flying at 300' using two observers. The 2021 count was delayed because of Covid-19 lockdown and did not occur until 13 September.

3.5 Special Pukeko Season

A special season for pukeko has been aligned with the special black swan season with a daily bag limit of 10 which applies across the entire Eastern Region.

The special season was initially proposed to alleviate crop damage, reduce mallard and grey duckling predation, and was based on the limited harvest recorded during the game bird season (2026 season: 2,236; 95% CI 1,491 –3,353). It is unclear how many hunters choose to participate but it appears to be minimal.

Between 2015–2026 the number of permits issued to disturb pukeko decreased (Figure 2) but has since been increasing (the last three months of 2026 data has been estimated).

Council needs to decide if it wishes to hold another special pukeko season in 2028 and if so, should the season align with the special swan season (if that is to occur)? It was suggested at the December 2023 meeting that the limit be increased to 20 for the special season.

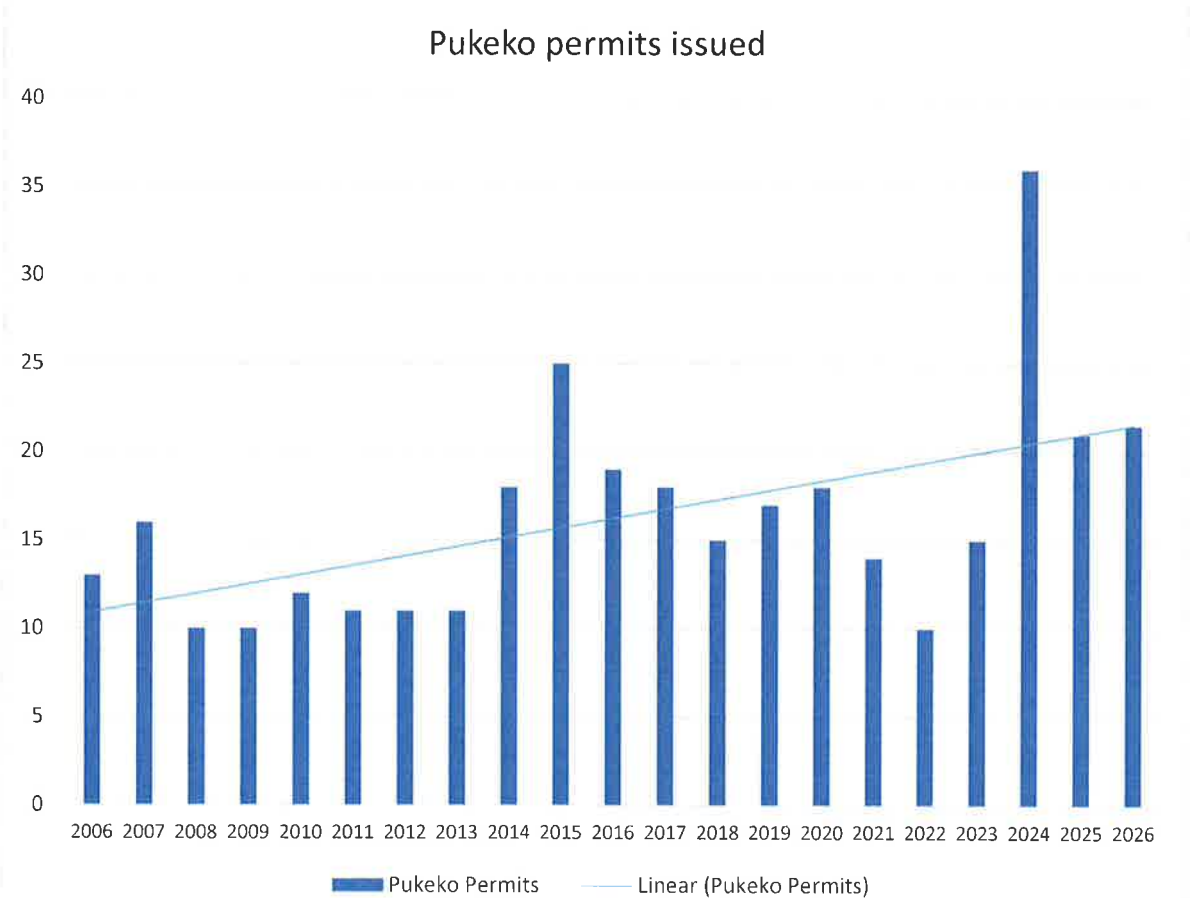


Figure 2. Number of pukeko permits to disturb issued by year in the Eastern Region. Note the last three months of 2026 has been estimated.

3.6 **Brown Quail**

There was no open season for brown quail in the Eastern Region in the years 2020 – 2026. This came about because of a perceived decline in the population. There has been no reported harvest (hunter survey) for many years.

Council needs to consider if a closed season should continue for the 2027 season. We have had no request to open the season over the past four years.

3.7 *Harvest criterion for all game birds*

Council have developed criteria to guide harvest regulations for the key species however, as mentioned above, there are several species such as shoveler, pukeko, and upland game where no criterion exists.

Because shoveler duck are very mobile they are monitored nationally. It would be useful to set regulations nationally for this species. As this is unlikely in the short-term the development of Eastern regulation guidelines for this species would be prudent.

Developing criteria for pukeko and upland game may be more difficult. Pukeko are not routinely monitored, while pheasant crow counts are undertaken before the breeding season and do not provide a complete measure of the population available for harvest

After today's meeting, clubs will be invited to comment on any issues they wish to raise for consideration at Council's next meeting (December 2026).

Staff will consider this feedback alongside available population monitoring, harvest information, HPAI advice and the matters raised by Council. A further paper will then be presented at the December 2026 meeting.

4. *Recommendation:*

- 4.1 *Receives this report.***
- 4.2 *That Council identifies any other game season condition matters it would like further information on, or consultation with hunters about, before its December 2026 meeting.***
- 4.3 *Notes the matters identified for consideration when developing the proposed 2027 Game Season conditions.***
- 4.4 *Supports staff seeking further information from NZC, MPI and DOC where this is required to inform Council's decisions.***
- 4.5 *Notes that game-bird hunting clubs will be invited to provide feedback before the proposed 2027 game-season conditions are presented to Council in December 2026.***

Appendix 1

Eastern Fish & Game Region – 2026/2027 Game Bird Season Regulations

1. Game That May Be Hunted or Killed — Duration of 2026/2027 Season

Species	Season Dates	Daily Bag Limit	Hunting Area
Grey/Mallard Duck	2 May to 1 Jun 2026	6	All areas
NZ Shoveler Duck	2 May to 1 Jun 2026	2	All areas
Paradise shelduck	2 May to 28 Jun 2026	6	Area A1 & A2
Paradise shelduck	2 May to 28 Jun 2026	10	Area B2 and part of B1 south of Uawa River Mouth
Paradise shelduck	2 May to 12 Jul 2026	20	Part of B1 north of Uawa River Mouth
Pūkeko	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	10	All areas
Pūkeko	27 Mar to 4 Apr 2027	10	All areas
Black Swan	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	No limit	Area A1
Black Swan	27 Mar to 4 Apr 2027	No limit	Area A1
Black Swan	2 May to 28 Jun 2026	5	Area A2
Black Swan	Closed Season	0	Area B1 & B2
Bobwhite Quail	Closed Season	0	All areas
Brown Quail	Closed Season	0	All areas
California Quail	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	No limit	Area A1 & A2
California Quail	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	5	Area B1 & B2
Cock Pheasant	2 May to 30 Aug 2026	5	All areas

2. Definition of Areas

- **Area A1:** Tauranga District, Western Bay of Plenty District, part of South Waikato east of SH1, Rotorua, Kawerau, Whakatāne, Ōpōtiki.
- **Area A2:** South Waikato west of SH1, Taupō, Ruapehu (Eastern Region).
- **Area B1:** Gisborne District.
- **Area B2:** Wairoa District (Eastern Region).

3. Shooting Hours

6:15am to 6:15pm for all species.

4. Decoy Limit

No limit.

5. Special Conditions

- Magazine shotgun restrictions (max 2 in magazine, 3 total).
- Falconry permitted with DoC authorisation (Australasian Harrier).
- No depositing or abandoning carcasses or litter.
- No drone use to disturb game birds.
- Restrictions on possessing deployable firearms in unmoored powered vessels.

Appendix 2

GAME SEASON CONDITION POLICIES

August 2025 unconfirmed minutes

13.6 Agreed (Scott Nicol/Alec McIver) resolutions b,c,d,f as follows:

- d. To reaffirm the use of a threshold model to set mallard and grey duck harvest regulations.*
- f. To reaffirm that the policy that applies to mallard and grey duck regulations under the respective current thresholds still applies. [25/08/13.6] Crs. Mark Sceats and Kevin Coutts wished to be recorded as opposing the motion.*

2.1 Mallard and Grey Duck (greyland)

- (i) Agreed (Barry Roderick/Steve Scragg) that Council re-affirms the threshold approach to setting mallard and grey duck harvest regulations (where grey duck are treated as mallard due to the difficulty in distinguishing between the species). [15/11/12.2]*
- (ii) Agreed (Barry Roderick/Steve Scragg) that the threshold levels are set at 350,000 and 450,000 such that at or below 350,000 a set of restricted conditions apply; above 350,000 and, at or below 450,000 a set of intermediate harvest regulations apply; and above 450,000 a relaxed set of conditions apply. [15/11/12.3]*
- (iii) Agreed (Barry Roderick/Steve Scragg) that restricted conditions shall comprise a 4-week season (including Queens Birthday when appropriate) with a bag limit of 6 mallard and grey duck; intermediate conditions shall comprise a 6-week season with a bag limit of 8 mallard and grey duck; and relaxed conditions shall comprise an 8-week season with a bag limit of 10 mallard and grey duck. [15/11/12.4]*
- (iv) 11.2 Agreed (Mike Jarvey/Murray Ferris) that the mallard and grey duck population thresholds and associated regulations currently used i.e the status quo shown in table 1 of*

the agenda item remain until further evidence points to an alternative approach. [23/12/11.2]

The Council reaffirmed the threshold approach to setting mallard and grey duck regulations at the August 2025 meeting:

2.2 Other Species

- (i) Agreed (Barry Roderick/Steve Scragg) that paradise shelduck and black swan thresholds and regulations remain the status quo and subject to January monitoring results. [15/11/12.5]*
- (ii) Agreed (Ian Pirani/Lindsay Lyons) that Council authorises staff to make a decision on Game Season Regulations outside of policy when an issue has been flagged. [12/10/8.2]*

Rationale for (v) as per October 2012 Council minutes:

“Cr Barry Roderick commented on the greylard population estimates being the lowest in 8 years and the mystery, last summer, with a very high ratio of juveniles in the traps. Matt McDougall said that in the last decade something had occurred in some years that's throwing us off track. Last year he was concerned over the reduced adults in the traps and those concerns were later vindicated by harvest results. Council discussed the policy for setting the season regulations and the short time frame available before these are presented to the Minister for approval. Rob Pitkethley said that in 4 out of 5 years the modelling policy would be used, but in the occasional year staff would like the ability to alter the policy direction if unusual results suggested something else was occurring. Staff were seeking guidance on how this unusual process could work and Cr Steve Scragg said that he would be comfortable with Matt McDougall and Rob Pitkethley making the appropriate call and providing confirmation by email to Council.”

- (iii) Agreed (Alan Baird/Adam Rayner) that Council supports changing the “Intermediate” regulations for black swan from a daily bag limit of 2 to 5 birds (i.e, when the population is assessed at 1,000-3,000 birds) to provide more incentive to hunt swan once the mallard season finishes. [18/11/10.15]*

2.3 Threshold Criteria for Paradise shelduck

Table 1: Eastern Paradise Shelduck threshold levels

LONG TERM POPULATION TREND	SEASON
Negative i.e. population declining	Restricted
Zero i.e. population stable	Intermediate
Positive i.e. population growing.	Relaxed

Table 2: Eastern Paradise Shelduck season conditions (Season per Table 1)

SEASON	Area	Specific Conditions	
		Length (weeks)	Bag Limit
Restricted	A1 & A2	4	4
	B2 & B1 South of true right bank Uawa River Mouth	4	4
Intermediate	A1, A2	8	6
	B2 & B1 South of the true right bank Uawa River Mouth	8	10
Relaxed	A1, A2, B2 & B1 South of the true right bank Uawa River Mouth	10	10
Fixed Season condition	B1 North of the true right bank Uawa River Mouth	10	20

2.4 Threshold Criteria for Black Swan

Table 3: Eastern Black Swan threshold levels

POPULATION SIZE	TREND	SEASON
Low (below 1,000)	Negative	Restricted
Low (below 1,000)	Zero	Restricted
Low (below 1,000)	Positive	Restricted
Moderate (between 1,000 and 3,000)	Negative	Intermediate
Moderate (between 1,000 and 3,000)	Zero	Intermediate
Moderate (between 1,000 and 3,000)	Positive	Relaxed
Greater than 3,000	Negative	Relaxed
Greater than 3,000	Zero	Relaxed
Greater than 3,000	Positive	Relaxed

Table 4: Eastern Black Swan season conditions (Season per Table 3)

SEASON	SPECIFIC CONDITIONS (LENGTH AND DAILY BAG).
Restricted	No season.
Intermediate	8-week season with a 5-bird limit for Management Units A1, A2 and B1. 6-week season with a 4-bird limit for Management Unit B2.
Relaxed	16-week season with a no-bird limit.

14. WAIKAREMOANA SPORTS FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT FUND

Ref: 2.01.07.01

26 September 2026

1. Purpose

To provide an end of year summary of expenditure of funds from the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund during the 2025-2026 year and approved the proposed budget for the 2026-2027 year.

2. Background

In 1999 ECNZ made a commitment to create a trust known as the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Trust ("Trust") as part of its consent for the Waikaremoana Power Scheme before its transfer to Genesis. The Trust was set up in response to concerns about the environmental, recreational, social, cultural and economic effects of the Waikaremoana Power Scheme ("WPS"). Due to Inland Revenue issues and the Trust being subject to taxes on interest, the Trust was disbanded soon after its formation, and the settlement was paid to Fish & Game to form the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund ("Waikaremoana Fund").

The objective of the Trust and now the Waikaremoana Fund is:

"To sustain and enhance habitat for sports fish within the Wairoa River catchment and enhance access of the public to recreational sports fish therein".

In addition to this key objective, there are a number of additional purposes that include:

- *To undertake research that furthers the objectives of the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund;*
- *Identify and evaluate areas in the catchment worth protection, restoration, enhancement, etc.;*
- *Carry out creel surveys;*
- *Carry out trials and monitoring on improving sports fish habitat;*
- *To create, improve, maintain signage and access to sports fisheries.*

The Fund contained an initial investment of \$250,000. When the Fund was established in 2000 the Council agreed that the principal should be protected with an inflation-based adjustment and spending from the Fund should be maintained within the interest generated.

The table below shows expenditure on projects and work areas since 2001. The items highlighted in yellow are projects undertaken/expenses incurred in 2025-2026.

Work Area	Amount funded (\$)
Information & access pamphlets	6,177
Signage & Information panels	7,046
2002 Angler Creel Survey	4,130
Contributions to Access through jetties, gangplanks, carparks etc	13,333
Habitat studies (Lake & River (2) Inventories, Wildlands reports)	9,521
2007 Angler Creel Survey	5,376
Fish research (River fish age/source otolith analysis)	928
Buoy construction share and installation	21,577
Buoy maintenance/servicing expenses	6,752
2012 Angler Creel Survey	5,944
Lagarosiphon Project	1,000

Water Quality Monitoring Report	4,990
Waikaremoana Buoy Maintenance	250
2014-15 Wairoa Catchment Access Investigations	5,204
2015-16 Survey Project	13,521
Waikaremoana Buoy	2,560
2015-16 Wairoa Access work and brochure	2,920
2016-17 Survey, Monitoring and Access	12,010
Waikaremoana Buoy	2,459
Lowrance Transducer/Transceiver - Parera	7,129
2017-18 Survey and Monitoring	5,061
2018-19 Survey, Monitoring, Access and 1/3 rd share of Buoy repairs	10,885
2019-20 Survey, Monitoring and Access	5,208
2020-21 Surveys, Access, Buoy Maintenance & Repairs	6,930
2021-22 Surveys, Access, Buoy Maintenance & Repairs, OxyGuard meter	6,128
2022-23 Surveys, Access, Buoy Maintenance & Repairs	6,078
2023-24 Surveys, Access, Buoy Maintenance & Repairs, Headwater River fisheries investigation (Waiau R.), Electric Fishing Machine	32,104
2024-25 Surveys, Access, Buoy Maintenance & Repairs	6,236
2025-26 Surveys, Access, Buoy Maintenance & Repairs	4,185
TOTAL	\$215,643

3. Discussion

Overview of 2025-2026 Expenditure

The March 2025 Council meeting saw Council approve further funding of up to \$6,500 for the 2025-26 OWP year to offset staff time and expenses associated with the monitoring, access and buoy maintenance. *Confirmed Minutes [25/03/9.5]*

At the August 2024 meeting Council approved the funding of up to \$15,500 for Navigational Markers for Lake Waikaremoana sought by the Lake Waikaremoana Boating and Fishing Association subject to receiving appropriate detailed information of the navigational markers, sites identified for markers, installation details and appropriate permission from Tuhoe and the Department of Conservation. *Confirmed Minutes [24/08/11.2]*

Of the \$6,500 approved for the 2025-26 OWP year, a total of \$4,185 was drawn down from the fund to undertake key work around Lake Waikaremoana and the Wairoa catchment which included staff time and expenses associated with survey and access work, and monitoring buoy servicing. Cr Murray Ferris advised at July's Council meeting that he understood that the navigation markers would be unlikely to proceed as difficulties continue around approval for these.

Information on other activities undertaken at Waikaremoana during the year were reported in the bi-monthly Operational Reports provided in Council's 2025-26 agendas.

4. Application for Funding towards Eastern Region's 2026-2027 OWP

The 2026-27 OWP provides for an ongoing compliance, monitoring, access and buoy related work programme at Waikaremoana. Eastern Region wishes to apply for \$10,000 from the Fund to contribute to the monitoring, access and buoy components of this programme. This funding would offset staff time and associated expenses; compliance and other activities are not eligible for funding from this source.

The budget for 2024-25 was set at the lower level of \$6,500 as staff were able to undertake work at the Lake in conjunction with Genesis Energy-funded activities. The 2025-26 the budget was also set at \$6,500 reflecting a reduced number of planned visits.

The proposed increase to \$10,000 reflects an increase in Fish & Game funded visits to Waikaremoana and incorporates an increased hourly overhead reimbursement rate of \$70 per hour, up from \$60 per hour.

4. Recommendation

4.1 That Council receives this update.

4.2 That Council reviews and approves this application for funding of up to \$10,000 from the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund.

15. OPERATIONAL REPORTS

15.1 FINANCE REPORT

Ref: 8.03.01

22 September 2026

1. Purpose

To inform the Council of end of year financial position and approve payments for the months of June, July and August 2026. This report currently aligns with the Financial Statements included within the Draft Annual Performance Report. There are some minor accruals to occur prior to completion of the financial statement, the detail of which is yet to be received.

Tables within this report:

Table 1	Profit and Loss to 31 August 2026
Table 2	Balance Sheet as at 31 August 2026
Table 3	Variance Report to 31 August 2026
Tables 4, 5 & 6	Bank Transactions June, July and August 2026
Tables 7 & 8	Credit Card Transactions June, July and August 2026

2. YTD Profit and Loss

The Profit & Loss statement for the period ending 31 August is provided in Table 1.

Summary

The net position for the 2025-2026 financial year at year end is a deficit of \$103,428 against a budgeted deficit of \$100,655, resulting in a net variance of \$2,773 (deficit).

The net deficit variance of \$2,773 is a result of income being lower than that budget by \$20,597, offset by expenditure being lower than budget by \$17,824.

Income	Var YTD	Expenses	Var YTD
Licence Sales	44,626 ▼	Depreciation/Loss on Sale	547 ▲
Other Income	24,029 ▲	Trout Inventory Revaluation	11,220 ▲
		Operating Expenses	39,372 ▼
		Administration Expenses	9,781 ▲
Total Variance Income	20,597 ▼	Total Variance Expenses	17,824 ▼
		Net	2,773 ▼

A more detailed summary is provided in the following notes.

Income

Licence Sales

Licence revenue ended the financial year \$44,626 below budget with Fish licence sales below budget \$29,772 and Game licence sales below budget \$14,854. A more detailed overview of licence sales is provided in the Licence Sales Report.

Other Income

Revenue from other sources for the three month period totalled \$76,014 and is made up of the following:

Hatchery revenue	\$17,043	Contracts	\$10,441
MOJ Fines/Legal recovery	\$2,031	Children's Fishing - April	\$683
Diversion – Jnr Education	\$1,050	Fishing competitions	\$409
Fish food, tours	\$549	Rentals	\$21,069
Agrodome Sponsorship	\$5,000	Donations	\$72
Boatshed lease	\$965	Insurance claim – Rental	\$2,052
Interest Waikaremoana Fund	\$6,715	Interest General	\$7,749
Miscellaneous	\$186	Total Other Income	\$76,014

Species Management

The Expenditure reported within the Population Monitoring budget is related to the cost of the Game Bird licences issued to band return winners which occurred at the start of the Game Bird season but were accrued in June.

The Population Monitoring output has ended the year below budget \$2,440.

Harvest Assessment expenditure is related to Game Hunter Surveys and is \$259 under budget at year end.

Hatchery spending was relatively light across the three-month period and consisted primarily of standard operational expenses including electricity, oxygen, rates, and fuel. Additional expenditure included tanker servicing, various maintenance items, materials required for transporting ova, and eDNA testing of the water supply. The Hatchery budgets ended the year \$1,814 below budget.

Overall, the Species Management output ended the year under budget by \$4,898.

Habitat

Works & Management expenditure for the period related primarily to fencing repairs and replacement in Thornton WMR and the fish trap reserve. Additional costs were incurred for level monitoring and a riser lid.

Assisted Habitat expenditure of \$4,113 in August is related to the transfer of staff time, and expenses associated with the water quality monitoring buoy, and access and survey work conducted at Waikaremoana during the year. This work is funded by the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund.

The Habitat output finished the year \$20,890 under budget. This was primarily due to the budget allocated for Navigation Markers at Waikaremoana remaining unspent (\$15,500). Staff costs associated with work in Waikaremoana were also below budget by 2,387.

The ballot holder Habitat fee budget remained unspent as the works carried out in the reserves is limited and supported by external parties. Funds collected from the Habitat fees will be transferred to the Habitat Management Reserve, enabling more significant works to be undertaken at a future date.

Participation

Expenditure within the Participation budgets includes contracted work on the Rangitaiki angler access tracks, as well as access signage and sign maintenance materials. Other expenditure during the period included expenses associated with the East Coast signs run, tackle for kids' fishing, a

cooker and materials for the Wairua hut, and electricity for the Waikaremoana hut. A reprint of the Rotorua Lakes Fishery brochure was also completed in June.

The participation output ended the year \$1,267 under budget. This was primarily due to some access works continuing to be funded by Kaingaroa Timberlands. The Participation budget has been reduced in the new financial year to reflect this ongoing external funding.

Public Interface

Minimal expenditure was incurred within the Public Interface output during the period, relating to public toilet cleaning, maintenance materials, and grass seed. The Public Interface output finished the year \$79 over budget.

Compliance

Compliance expenditure includes the ongoing costs of the 0800 Poaching service, mobile phone charges, and legal fees associated with prosecutions. CERT training was undertaken in August, with associated expenditure relating to travel reimbursements and catering. The Compliance output ended the year \$2,598 under budget, primarily due to lower than budgeted legal fees.

Licensing

Licensing costs include agent commissions and fees associated with the Public Online sales. Total expenditure at year end is \$10,087 under budget, primarily due to reduced licence sales and the continued shift toward online sales, which has reduced the overall cost of sales. The reduction in licensing costs will partially offset the shortfall in licence revenue.

Council

Council expenditure reported in July related to travel reimbursements and catering for the July Council meeting. Council spending ended the year \$974 over budget.

Planning

The Management & Strategic Planning output includes the R3 budget, with expenditure relating to the 4x4 Expo, memberships to the Rotorua Chamber of Commerce and Chinese Community of Commerce, a sales and marketing meeting with local guides and Rotorua NZ, and the purchase of caps, bottles, and lens cleaners for sale and promotional purposes.

The audit fee was accrued and NZC levies were paid in August.

The Planning output finished the year \$685 under budget.

Administration

Salaries	Salaries ended the year \$6,055 under budget, primarily due to a delay between staff leaving and replacement staff being employed.
Staff Expenses	The most significant expense within Staff Expenses was ACC levies, which were incurred in July, with a portion being accrued out in August, resulting in the negative figure shown for that month. Other expenditure related to Growsafe courses, staff clothing, travel and parking costs, BBQ expenses, and flowers and cards for staff bereavements. A Givealittle donation was also made on behalf of the Council in lieu of flowers for a bereavement. Health and Safety expenditure related to supplies for HPAI response kits, safety boots, and two handheld radios for compliance and grounds work. At year end, staff expenses were \$6,348 over budget. The variance was primarily due to FBT being under-budgeted (\$4,544) along with increased costs associated employing new staff.

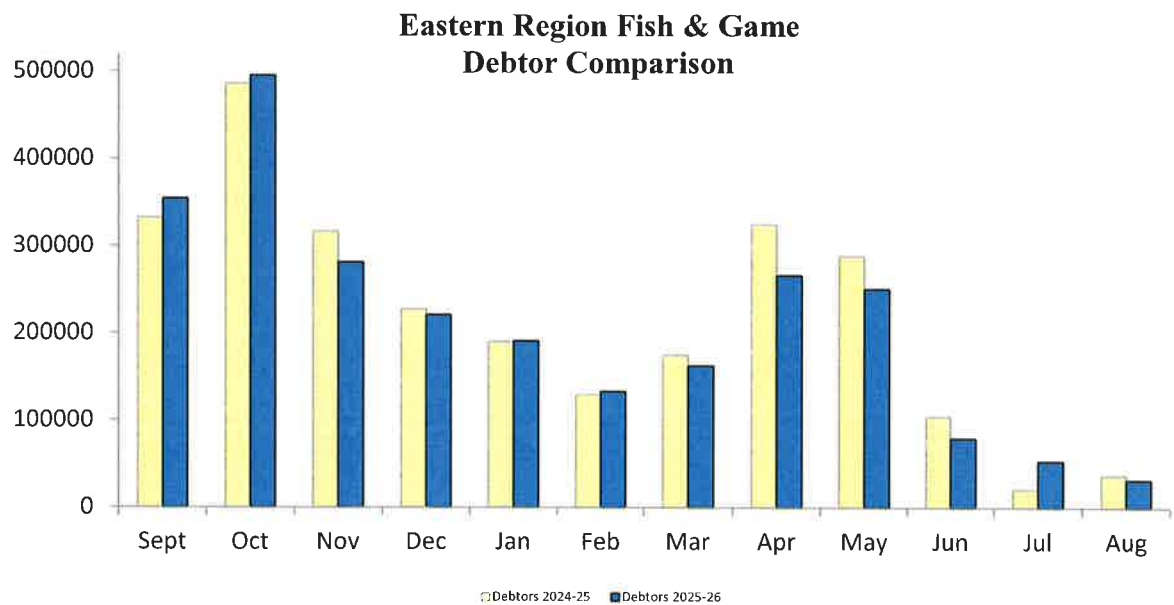
Staff Houses	Staff House expenditure was particularly high in August and related to repairs to the shower in one of the houses (covered by insurance), plumbing repairs, and septic tank cleaning at one house and the staff quarters. The Staff Houses budgets finished the year \$5,044 over budget with \$2,052 of this expenditure covered by insurance. The remaining variance reflects additional maintenance occurring as needed. The current tenants in both of the houses are valued, and take good care of the properties.
Office Premises	Standard expenditure for electricity, cleaning, rubbish removal, and alarm monitoring is reported within the Office Premises budgets. An additional expense was incurred in August to replace the soak hole at the rear of the administration building. In recent years, the rear entrance has become ankle-deep in water during periods of heavy rain. We have therefore taken the opportunity replace the soak hole with a 3-cubic-meter system capable of managing the runoff from the entire rear of the building, as well as overflow from the driveway. As a result of this additional expenditure, along with the overspend on repairs and painting of the administration building roof, the Office Premises budget finished the year \$9,613 over budget. Additional income received through contracts during the year will offset this overspend.
Office Equipment	Office Equipment expenses include the phone system and eftpos lease costs, along with minor equipment purchases. A cell phone was purchased for our newest staff member, and this has been funded through the Asset Replacement Reserve. The Office Equipment budgets ended the year \$373 over budget.
Communications/ Consumables	Communications spending includes standard expenses for 0800 service, Garmin inReach, staff mobile plans, 2Talk calling plan, Starlink and stationery. Additional expenditure during the period related to IT services and ESET Cloud protection. The Communications area is \$1,728 under budget at year end.
General	General Expenses include SurveyMonkey, Xero, Coastguard subscriptions, and tearoom supplies. In August a subscription to ApprovalMax was added as a Xero add-on, providing a full audit trail for the approval of accounts. This new system reduces the manual processing of accounts through the office. Penalty interest was incurred on a delayed GST payment. Although the payment had been set up, the account sweep facility, which transfers funds between our accounts, did not work as anticipated. IRD subsequently reversed the penalties but were unable to reverse the associated interest of \$168. General expenses ended the year under budget \$2,158.
General Equipment	Maintenance expenditure during the period related to flares, bungs for Kotare, and our SeaFlux subscription. A new electric backpack spray unit was purchase for access work. Other expenditure included minor equipment and tractor maintenance materials. Overall, General Equipment expenditure is \$1,000 under budget at year end.
Vehicles	Vehicle maintenance expenditure for the period included four vehicle services and a set of tyres. Additional vehicle costs included RUC's, and fuel. Vehicle expenditure ended the year \$657 under budget.

Cash Position: As at 31 August 2026

\$ 841,089	(includes \$30,318 Asset Replacement Reserve)
\$ 509,176	(Waikaremoana SFHEF – Restricted Reserve)
\$ 1,350,265	Total

Debtors: Outstanding Debtors \$31,453 as at 31 August 2026 (\$37,217 as at 31 August 2025).

Eastern Region Fish and Game - Debtors Balance Comparison 2024/25-2025/26



Agent debtors are up to date, no concerns overall.

3. Variance Report (Table 3)

The variance report shows the actual result including staff hours entered for each project area to provide Council with an overview of the staff time component of the Operational Work Plan.

Table 1 Profit and Loss - Council

Eastern Fish and Game Council for the 2 months ending 31 August 2026

	Jun 2026	Jul 2026	Aug 2026	YTD Actual	Total Budget	Var YTD	Var %
Income							
Licence Income	22,437	12,750	10,556	1,424,693	1,469,319	(44,626)	-3%
Other Income	11,651	32,579	31,783	263,952	239,923	24,029	10%
Total Income	34,088	45,330	42,339	1,688,645	1,709,242	(20,597)	-1%
Operating Expenses							
Depreciation	7,032	7,032	6,693	87,494	89,195	(1,701)	-2%
Loss on Disposal/Trout Inventory Revaluation	0	0	12,078	13,467	0	13,467	0%
1100 SPECIES MANAGEMENT							
1110 Population Monitoring	908	0	0	34,899	37,339	(2,440)	-7%
1120 Harvest Assessment	1,310	277	428	3,081	3,340	(259)	-8%
1140 Hatchery Operations	1,026	2,552	1,539	104,336	106,150	(1,814)	-2%
1180 Game Bird Control	14	0	0	14	400	(386)	-97%
Total 1100 SPECIES MANAGEMENT	3,257	2,829	1,966	142,331	147,229	(4,898)	-3%
1200 HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT							
1220 Works & Management	5,651	51	2,085	11,124	14,200	(3,076)	-22%
1230 Assisted Habitat	0	0	4,113	4,185	22,000	(17,815)	-81%
Total 1200 HABITAT PROTECTION/MNGMNT	5,651	51	6,198	15,310	36,200	(20,890)	-58%
1300 PARTICIPATION							
1310 Access	221	353	609	3,533	4,800	(1,267)	-26%
1340 Other Publications	941	0	0	1,903	2,000	(98)	-5%
1350 Training	0	32	0	366	850	(484)	-57%
1370 Huts	392	132	123	2,031	1,450	581	40%
Total 1300 PARTICIPATION	1,554	517	733	7,833	9,100	(1,267)	-14%
1400 PUBLIC INTERFACE							
1410 Liaison	0	0	0	16	100	(84)	-84%
1440 Public Promotions	0	0	0	248	1,000	(752)	-75%
1450 Visitor Facilities	50	10	158	1,415	500	915	183%
Total 1400 PUBLIC INTERFACE	50	10	158	1,679	1,600	79	5%
1500 COMPLIANCE							
1510 Ranging	70	70	52	1,519	1,000	519	52%
1520 Ranger Training	0	0	480	618	1,000	(382)	-38%
1530 Compliance	0	0	100	1,265	4,000	(2,735)	-68%
Total 1500 COMPLIANCE	70	70	632	3,402	6,000	(2,598)	-43%
1600 LICENSING							
1610 Licence Prod/Distrib	0	306	13	339	60	279	465%
1630 Commission	738	443	330	48,407	58,773	(10,366)	-18%
Total 1600 LICENSING	738	749	343	48,746	58,833	(10,087)	-17%
1700 COUNCIL							
1720 Council Meetings	0	1,708	0	9,474	8,500	974	11%
Total 1700 COUNCIL	0	1,708	0	9,474	8,500	974	11%
1800 PLANNING/REPORTING							
1810 Management & Strategic Planning	218	872	315	3,159	2,500	659	26%
1830 Reporting/Audit	0	0	11,270	11,270	12,500	(1,230)	-10%
1840 National Liaison	0	0	24,839	99,440	99,555	(115)	0%
Total 1800 PLANNING/REPORTING	218	872	36,423	113,870	114,555	(685)	-1%
1900 ADMINISTRATION							
1910 Salaries	77,154	80,308	103,979	1,090,260	1,096,315	(6,055)	-1%
1920 Staff Expenses	1,179	4,643	(954)	49,348	43,000	6,348	15%
1930 Staff Houses	493	1,368	5,110	23,194	18,150	5,044	28%
1940 Office Premises	2,453	2,305	4,885	69,513	59,900	9,613	16%
1950 Office Equipment	231	1007	275	4,023	3,650	373	0%
1960 Communications/Consumables	750	1,806	703	12,872	14,600	(1,728)	-9%
1970 General	329	422	675	16,712	18,870	(2,158)	-11%
1980 General Equipment	312	346	1,015	17,800	18,800	(1,000)	-5%
1990 Vehicles	4,970	3,202	5,096	64,743	65,400	(657)	-1%
Total 1900 ADMINISTRATION	87,873	95,408	120,783	1,348,466	1,338,685	9,781	1%
Total Operating Expenses	106,443	109,246	186,005	1,792,073	1,809,897	(17,824)	-1%
Net Profit	(72,355)	(63,917)	(143,666)	(103,428)	(100,655)	(2,773)	3%

Table 2 Balance Sheet

Eastern Fish and Game Council

As at 31 August 2026

Assets	31 Aug 2026	31 Aug 2025
Bank		
Westpac Current Account	20,671	10,694
Westpac Call Account	292,128	201,047
Petty Cash	584	237
Investments	531,141	614,650
Waikaremoana Fund Investments	509,176	493,035
Total Bank	1,353,700	1,319,663
Current Assets		
Accounts Receivable	31,453	37,217
Inventory - Fish Stock	221,114	232,334
Prepayments and Accrued Income	9,869	6,885
Total Current Assets	262,436	276,436
Fixed Assets		
Buildings	1,049,503	1,049,503
Land	102,000	102,000
Motor Vehicles	436,810	478,550
Office Equipment	69,408	65,959
Plant & Equipment	192,508	192,508
Accum Dep Land & Buildings	(841,266)	(813,441)
Accum Dep Motor Vehicles	(144,113)	(154,813)
Accum Dep Office Equipment	(55,775)	(49,948)
Accum Dep Plant & Equipment	(150,747)	(140,030)
Total Fixed Assets	658,328	730,288
Total Assets	2,274,463	2,326,387
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	71,194	34,940
Accruals and Prepaid Licences	99,391	101,883
Employee Entitlements	138,154	133,365
GST	471	(4,921)
PAYE Clearing	28,091	26,263
Staff Social Club	2,666	1,671
Westpac Business Credit Card - A Alaeinia	720	(1,901)
Westpac Business Credit Card - K Thompson	2,715	598
Total Current Liabilities	343,402	291,897
Total Liabilities	343,402	291,897
Net Assets	1,931,061	2,034,489
Equity		
Accumulated Funds	1,263,978	1,183,352
Asset Replacement Reserve	30,318	14,700
Back Country Fisheries Reserve	152,172	153,252
Breeding Programme Reserve	5,018	5,018
Fish for Gold Reserve	14,000	14,000
Hatchery Water Reticulation Reserve	16,109	16,109
Hunter Ballot Reserve	19,498	14,012
Waikaremoana Sportsfish Habitat Enhancement Fund Reserve	504,678	490,425
Awakaponga Water Reticulation Reserve	27,826	27,826
Property Maintenance Reserve	892	520
Current Year Earnings	(103,428)	115,275
Total Equity	1,931,061	2,034,489

Table 3 2025/2026 REPORT OF VARIANCES BETWEEN TOTAL BUDGET AND YEAR TO DATE ACTUAL EXPENDITURE AND INCOME

as at 31 August 2026

Schedule B Code	Project	EXTERNAL COSTS		HOURS		INTERNAL COST		NETABLE INCOME		NET COST		NET COST	Variance	%
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual			
1110	Species Monitoring	\$ 37,339	\$ 34,899	2,101	2,151	\$ 160,045	\$ 170,970	\$ -	\$ 2,181	\$ 197,384	\$ 203,688	\$ (6,304)	103.2	
1120	Harvest Assessment	\$ 3,340	\$ 3,081	786	735	\$ 59,874	\$ 58,421	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 63,214	\$ 61,502	\$ 1,712	97.3	
1140	Hatchery Operations	\$ 106,150	\$ 104,336	3,128	3,099	\$ 238,277	\$ 246,320	\$ 68,000	\$ 50,311	\$ 276,427	\$ 300,345	\$ (23,918)	108.7	
1160	Releases	\$ -	\$ -	134	294	\$ 10,208	\$ 23,368	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,208	\$ 23,368	\$ (13,161)	228.9	
1170	Regulations	\$ -	\$ -	80	86	\$ 6,094	\$ 6,836	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,094	\$ 6,836	\$ (742)	112.2	
1180	Control	\$ 400	\$ 14	36	30	\$ 2,742	\$ 2,385	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,142	\$ 2,399	\$ 744	76.3	
	TOTAL - SPECIES MANAGEMENT	\$ 147,229	\$ 142,330	6,265	6,395	\$ 477,240	\$ 508,299	\$ 68,000	\$ 52,492	\$ 556,469	\$ 598,137	\$ (41,669)	107.5	
1210	Resource Management Act	\$ -	\$ -	1,538	1,575	\$ 117,158	\$ 125,187	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 117,158	\$ 125,187	\$ (8,029)	106.9	
1220	Works & Management	\$ 14,200	\$ 11,124	970	809	\$ 73,890	\$ 64,302	\$ 11,650	\$ 13,758	\$ 76,440	\$ 61,688	\$ 14,772	80.7	
1230	Assisted Habitat	\$ -	\$ -	658	378	\$ 50,123	\$ 30,045	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,123	\$ 30,045	\$ 20,079	59.9	
1240	Assess & Monitor	\$ -	\$ -	72	11	\$ 5,485	\$ 874	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,485	\$ 874	\$ 4,610	15.9	
1250	Lake Waikaremoana	\$ -	\$ -	0	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0	
	TOTAL - HABITAT PROTECTION & M	\$ 14,200	\$ 11,124	3,238	2,773	\$ 246,656	\$ 220,409	\$ 11,650	\$ 13,758	\$ 249,206	\$ 217,775	\$ 31,432	87.4	
1310	Access	\$ 4,800	\$ 3,533	670	571	\$ 51,038	\$ 45,385	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 55,838	\$ 48,918	\$ 6,919	87.6	
1330	Newsletters/Information	\$ -	\$ -	276	198	\$ 21,024	\$ 15,738	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21,024	\$ 15,738	\$ 5,287	74.9	
1340	Other Publications	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,903	30	2	\$ 2,285	\$ 159	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,285	\$ 2,062	\$ 2,223	48.1	
1350	Training	\$ 850	\$ 366	807	536	\$ 61,474	\$ 42,803	\$ 12,250	\$ 12,103	\$ 50,074	\$ 30,866	\$ 19,207	61.6	
1360	Club Relations	\$ -	\$ -	36	35	\$ 2,742	\$ 2,782	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,742	\$ 2,782	\$ (40)	101.4	
1370	Huts	\$ 1,450	\$ 2,031	50	29	\$ 3,809	\$ 2,305	\$ 400	\$ 991	\$ 4,859	\$ 3,345	\$ 1,514	68.8	
	TOTAL - ANGLER & HUNTER PARTIC	\$ 9,100	\$ 7,833	1,869	1,371	\$ 142,372	\$ 108,972	\$ 12,650	\$ 13,094	\$ 138,822	\$ 103,711	\$ 35,111	74.7	
1410	Liaison	\$ 100	\$ 16	205	140	\$ 15,616	\$ 11,128	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15,716	\$ 11,144	\$ 4,572	70.9	
1420	Communication	\$ -	\$ -	168	64	\$ 12,797	\$ 5,087	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,797	\$ 5,087	\$ 7,711	39.7	
1440	Public Promotions	\$ 1,000	\$ 248	146	91	\$ 11,122	\$ 7,233	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,122	\$ 7,481	\$ 4,640	61.7	
1450	Visitor Facilities/Education	\$ 500	\$ 1,415	681	425	\$ 51,876	\$ 33,781	\$ -	\$ 1,796	\$ 52,376	\$ 33,400	\$ 18,976	63.8	
	TOTAL - PUBLIC INTERFACE	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,679	1,200	720	\$ 91,411	\$ 57,228	\$ -	\$ 1,796	\$ 93,011	\$ 57,112	\$ 35,899	61.4	
1510	Ranger Training	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,519	1,146	1,555	\$ 87,297	\$ 123,597	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 88,297	\$ 125,116	\$ (36,819)	141.7	
1520	Compliance Prosecutions	\$ 1,000	\$ 618	116	92	\$ 8,836	\$ 7,313	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,836	\$ 7,931	\$ 1,906	80.6	
1530	TOTAL - COMPLIANCE	\$ 6,000	\$ 3,402	1,570	1,967	\$ 119,596	\$ 156,345	\$ 5,000	\$ 6,790	\$ 120,596	\$ 152,957	\$ (32,361)	126.8	
1610	Licensing	\$ 60	\$ 339	146	152	\$ 11,122	\$ 12,082	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,182	\$ 12,421	\$ (1,239)	111.1	
1620	Agent Servicing	\$ -	\$ -	91	72	\$ 6,932	\$ 5,723	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,932	\$ 5,723	\$ 1,209	82.6	
	TOTAL - LICENSING	\$ 60	\$ 339	237	224	\$ 18,054	\$ 17,804	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18,114	\$ 18,143	\$ (30)	100.2	
1710	Council Elections	\$ -	\$ -	0	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0	
1720	Council Meetings	\$ 8,500	\$ 9,474	707	840	\$ 53,856	\$ 66,766	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 62,356	\$ 76,240	\$ (13,884)	122.3	
	TOTAL - COUNCILS	\$ 8,500	\$ 9,474	707	840	\$ 53,856	\$ 66,766	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 62,356	\$ 76,240	\$ (13,884)	122.3	
1810	Management Planning	\$ 2,500	\$ 3,159	290	416	\$ 22,091	\$ 33,065	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 24,591	\$ 36,224	\$ (11,633)	147.3	
1820	Annual Planning	\$ -	\$ -	104	75	\$ 7,922	\$ 5,961	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,922	\$ 5,961	\$ 1,961	75.2	
1830	Reporting/Audit	\$ 12,500	\$ 11,270	466	327	\$ 35,498	\$ 25,991	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 47,998	\$ 37,261	\$ 10,737	77.6	
1840	National Liaison	\$ 200	\$ 86	264	197	\$ 20,110	\$ 15,658	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,310	\$ 15,744	\$ 4,566	77.5	
	TOTAL - PLANNING/REPORTING	\$ 15,200	\$ 14,515	1,124	1,015	\$ 85,621	\$ 80,676	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,821	\$ 95,191	\$ 5,630	94.4	
		\$ 201,889	\$ 190,696	16,210	15,305	\$ 1,234,805	\$ 1,216,500	\$ 97,300	\$ 87,930	\$ 1,339,394	\$ 1,319,267	\$ 20,127	98.5	

Table 3 Cont...		EXTERNAL COSTS				NETABLE INCOME				NET COST		NET COST		%	
		OVERHEADS													
		Budget	Actual			Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Variance	Budget	Variance		
1910	Salaries	\$ 1,096,315	\$ 1,090,260			\$ 23,130	\$ 47,915	\$ 1,073,185	\$ 1,042,345	\$ 30,840		\$ 1,073,185	\$ 30,840	97.1	
1920	Staff Expenses	\$ 43,000	\$ 49,349			\$ -	\$ -	\$ 43,000	\$ 49,349	\$ (6,349)		\$ 43,000	\$ (6,349)	114.8	
1930	Staff Houses	\$ 18,150	\$ 23,194			\$ 80,000	\$ 79,527	\$ (61,850)	\$ (56,333)	\$ (5,517)		\$ (61,850)	\$ (5,517)	91.1	
1940	Office Premises	\$ 59,900	\$ 69,513			\$ -	\$ -	\$ 59,900	\$ 69,513	\$ (9,613)		\$ 59,900	\$ (9,613)	116.0	
1950	Office Equipment	\$ 3,650	\$ 4,023			\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,650	\$ 4,023	\$ (373)		\$ 3,650	\$ (373)	110.2	
1960	Communications/Consumables	\$ 14,600	\$ 12,872			\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,600	\$ 12,872	\$ 1,728		\$ 14,600	\$ 1,728	88.2	
1970	General	\$ 18,870	\$ 16,712			\$ 750	\$ 4,525	\$ 18,120	\$ 12,187	\$ 5,933		\$ 18,120	\$ 5,933	67.3	
1980	General Equipment	\$ 18,800	\$ 17,800			\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18,800	\$ 17,800	\$ 1,000		\$ 18,800	\$ 1,000	94.7	
1990	Vehicles	\$ 65,400	\$ 64,744			\$ -	\$ -	\$ 65,400	\$ 64,744	\$ 656		\$ 65,400	\$ 656	99.0	
	Administration	\$ 1,338,685	\$ 1,348,467			\$ 103,880	\$ 131,967	\$ 1,234,805	\$ 1,216,500	\$ 18,305		\$ 1,234,805	\$ 18,305	98.5	
	Total Overhead Net Cost							\$ 1,234,805	\$ 1,216,500			\$ 1,234,805			
	Total Outputs Staff Hours							16,210	15,305			16,210			
	Internal Cost Per Hour							76.18	79.48			76.18			
2025/2026 REPORT OF VARIANCES BETWEEN TOTAL BUDGET AND YEAR TO DATE ACTUAL EXPENDITURE AND INCOME															
Schedule C		EXTERNAL COSTS				INTERNAL COST				NETABLE INCOME				NET COST	
Code	Output	Budget	Actual			Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	NET COST	%
1	Species Management	\$ 147,229	\$ 142,330			6,395	\$ 477,240	\$ 508,299	\$ 68,000	\$ 52,492	\$ 556,469	\$ 598,137	\$ (41,669)	107.5	
2	Habitat Protection & Management	\$ 14,200	\$ 11,124			2,773	\$ 246,656	\$ 220,409	\$ 11,650	\$ 13,758	\$ 249,206	\$ 217,775	\$ 31,432	87.4	
3	Angler & Hunter Participation	\$ 9,100	\$ 7,933			1,371	\$ 142,372	\$ 108,972	\$ 12,650	\$ 13,094	\$ 138,822	\$ 103,711	\$ 35,111	74.7	
4	Public Interface	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,679			720	\$ 91,411	\$ 57,228	\$ -	\$ 1,796	\$ 93,011	\$ 57,112	\$ 35,899	61.4	
5	Compliance	\$ 6,000	\$ 3,402			1,967	\$ 119,596	\$ 156,345	\$ 5,000	\$ 6,790	\$ 120,596	\$ 152,957	\$ (32,361)	126.8	
6	Licensing	\$ 60	\$ 339			224	\$ 18,054	\$ 17,804	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18,114	\$ 18,143	\$ (30)	100.2	
7	Councils	\$ 8,500	\$ 9,474			840	\$ 53,856	\$ 66,766	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 62,356	\$ 76,240	\$ (13,884)	122.3	
8	Planning, Reporting	\$ 15,200	\$ 14,515			1,015	\$ 85,621	\$ 80,676	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,821	\$ 95,191	\$ 5,630	94.4	
9	Administration														
	Total Overhead Staff Hours					3,146	3,383								
	TOTAL BUDGET	\$ 201,889	\$ 190,696			19,356	\$ 1,234,805	\$ 1,216,500	\$ 97,300	\$ 87,930	\$ 1,339,394	\$ 1,319,267	\$ 20,127		
	Licence Income 2025-2026					% year complete				% of OWP budget spent					
	2025-26 Fish Licence Income	\$ 1,221,548	\$ 1,191,776			OWP Bulk Fund				Actual Net Cost YTD				98%	
	Less Commission	\$ -	\$ 48,862			Adjustment to OWP budgets - National Approved Budget				less Interest					
	Net Fish Licence Income	\$ 1,172,686	\$ 1,191,776			Plus NZ Fish & Game Levies				\$ (19,820)				\$ (23,880)	
	2026 Game Licence Income	\$ 247,771	\$ 232,918			Less Licence Revenue				\$ (1,469,319)				\$ (1,424,693)	
	Less Commission	\$ -	\$ 9,911			Plus Commission Expense				\$ 58,773				\$ 48,407	
	Net Game Licence Income	\$ 237,860	\$ 232,918			Plus Gain Loss on Sale/revaluation				\$ (4,210)				\$ 11,731	
	Total Licence Income	\$ 1,469,319	\$ 1,424,693			Depreciation				\$ 89,195				\$ 87,494	
	Total Commission	\$ 58,773	\$ 48,407			Subtotal				\$ 93,368				\$ 117,680	
	Total Net 2025-26 Licence Revenue	\$ 1,410,546	\$ 1,376,286			Adj to OWP budgets - Waikaremoana Fund				Less Waikaremoana Fund Interest				\$ (18,438)	
						Plus Waikaremoana Fund Expenses				\$ 22,000				\$ 4,185	
						Adjusted Budget				Actual(surplus)/deficitYTD				\$ 103,427	
						Total				\$ 100,655				\$ 103,427	

15.2 MANAGEMENT REPORT

15 July 2026

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

1112 Datawatch

During the 2025-26 season to 31 August 2026 a total of 676 Datawatch tags were returned via Te Wairoa trap returns and anglers. The distribution is as follows:

Okareka	21
Okataina	109
Rerewhakaaitu	27
Rotoehu	12
Rotoiti	123
Rotoma	20
Tarawera	364

Data entered from 01/10/25 – 31/08/26

The 2025-26 season tag return total has decreased by 178 tags compared to the 2024-25 season. Lakes Okataina (down 53 tags), Rerewhakaaitu (down 11 tags), Rotoehu (down 5 tags), Rotoma (down 25 tags) and Tarawera (down 102 tags) have all decreased, whereas Lakes Okareka (up 10 tags) and Rotoiti (up 6 tags) have increased compared to last season. The reduced number of tags coming from Lake Okataina is potentially a reflection of a lower harvest rate cause by the current access issue. The reduced numbers of tag returns in Lake Tarawera this year can be explained by an almost 50% reduction in fish running through the Te Wairoa trap compared to last year.

1113 Lake Waikaremoana

Waikaremoana Water Quality Monitoring Buoy

The Lake Waikaremoana monitoring buoy has been operating consistently over the past couple months. The weather station is currently nonfunctional and will be looked at the next time the buoy is sent off to Limnotrack for servicing. Staff are planning to carry out maintenance on the buoy in conjunction with the Waikaretaheke drift dive if weather conditions and timing allows this spring. We are also currently in discussion with Genesis Energy to assist with funding of current and future buoy maintenance/upgrade costs. Limnotrack has proposed the idea of a new webpage which will provide user friendly lake and weather information for anglers to better utilise. The extent at which this goes ahead will be reliant on assistance from Genesis Energy.

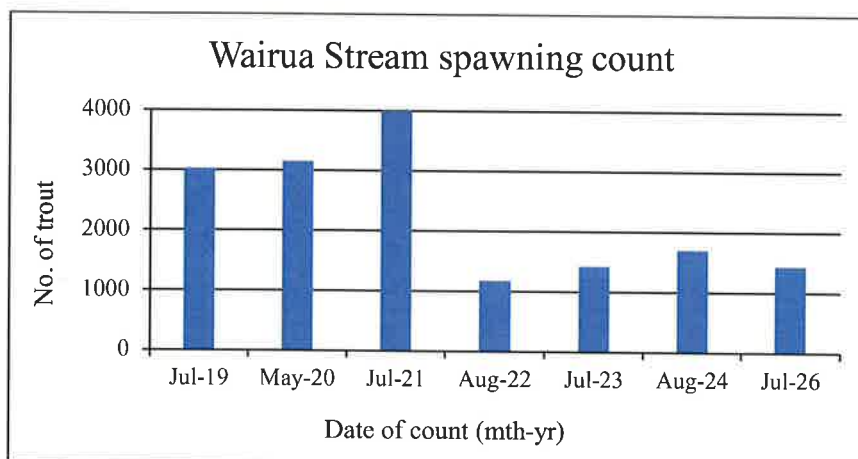
Waikaretaheke drift dive

As part of our monitoring contract with Genesis Energy, four F&G staff are scheduled to undertake a drift dive on the Waikaretaheke river this Spring. This is part of an ongoing monitoring programme to assess the impacts of recreational flow releases on the trout population in the Waikaretaheke River below the Piripaua Power Station. Dives have been contracted to take place every 5 years with the last survey taking place in 2018.

1114 Lake Tarawera

Wairua stream spawning counts

A Wairua stream count was undertaken on the 29/07/2026 where 1,445 large fish were counted. This count remains similar to that of the previous 5 years. Fish size was noted to be very good quality and anecdotally the biggest seen in many years. This observation coincides with this winter's Te Wairoa trapping results which reported a 5-year+ high in average weight and length.

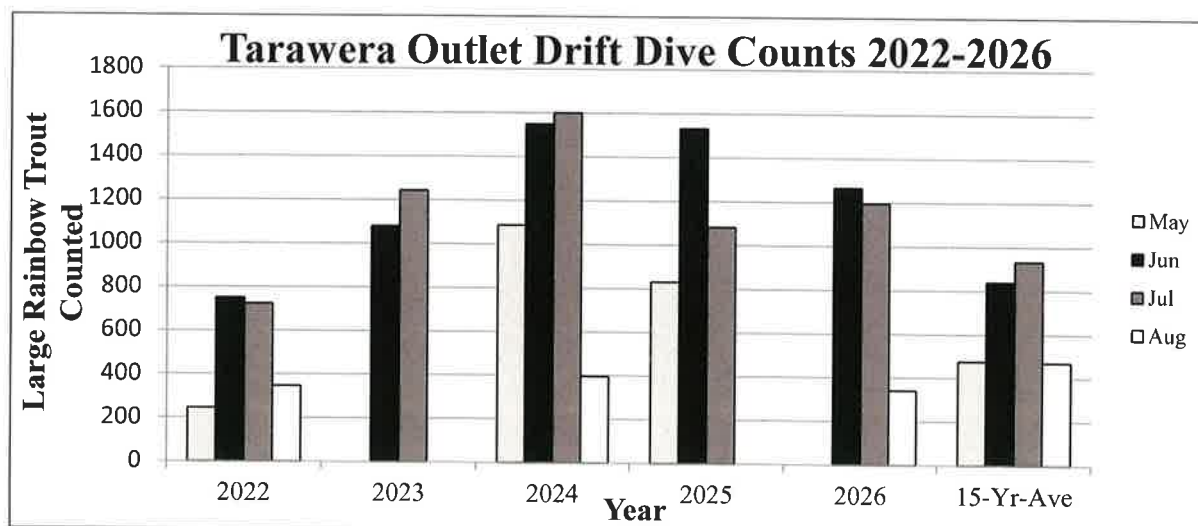


Tarawera Outlet Drift Dive Survey

Fish & Game staff completed three drift dives of the Tarawera Outlet during winter 2026. The June count was undertaken on 30th June, the July count was undertaken on 27th July and the August representative count was taken on the 7th September. Due to poor weather and lake conditions at the latter end of August, the August count was delayed until early September.

	Small	Medium	Large	2026 Total	2025 total	2024 total
May	-	-	-	-	860	1095
June	0	1	1,266	1,267	1,533	1,552
July	1	0	1,194	1,195	1,082	1,602
August	1	0	341	342	-	396

Trout counts in Winter 2026 were higher than the 15-year average for June and July. The August count in 2026 were similar to that in 2022 and 2024 but lower compared to the 15-year average. Across all three dives the majority of fish were in great condition.



Tarawera Acoustic Smelt Monitoring

Temporal and Spatial Variability of Backscattering in Lake Tarawera May 2026

Summary

Analysis of backscattering coefficient surveys conducted between November 2018 and May 2026 indicates substantial temporal and spatial variability across the study area. The most recent survey (May 2026) shows the highest spatial extent and intensity of elevated backscattering values observed during the monitoring period. Compared with earlier surveys, the May 2026 survey is characterized by a broad central zone of high backscatter values, suggesting a significant increase in the abundance, concentration, or distribution of scattering material within the water column.

Temporal trend

The May 2026 survey demonstrates:

- Broad distribution of elevated backscattering coefficients across much of the study area.
- High maximum values comparable to the highest levels observed in previous surveys.
- Large spread between minimum and maximum values, indicating strong spatial heterogeneity.
- Increased coverage of elevated values rather than isolated hotspots.

These results suggest a substantial shift in spatial structure, with elevated backscatter becoming a dominant feature across the central region of the study area.

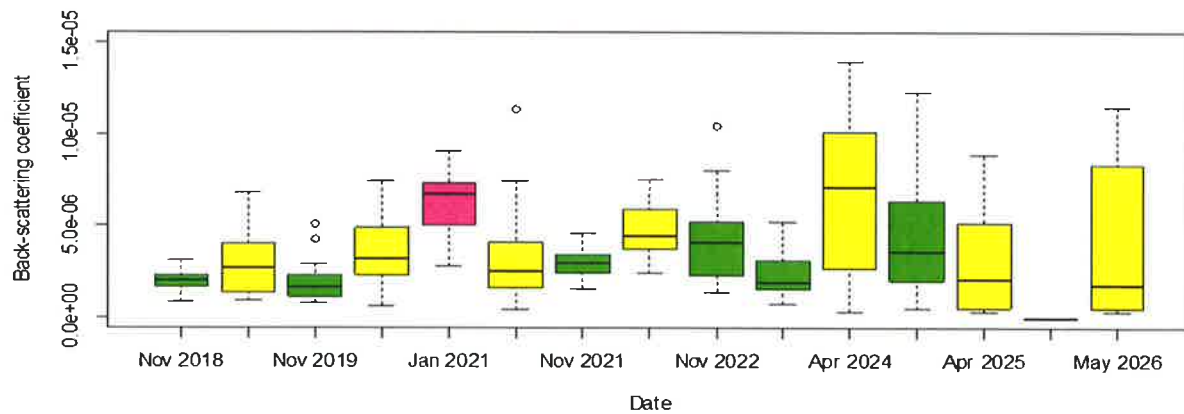
Spatial distribution

The May 2026 survey represents the most extensive high-backscatter event observed:

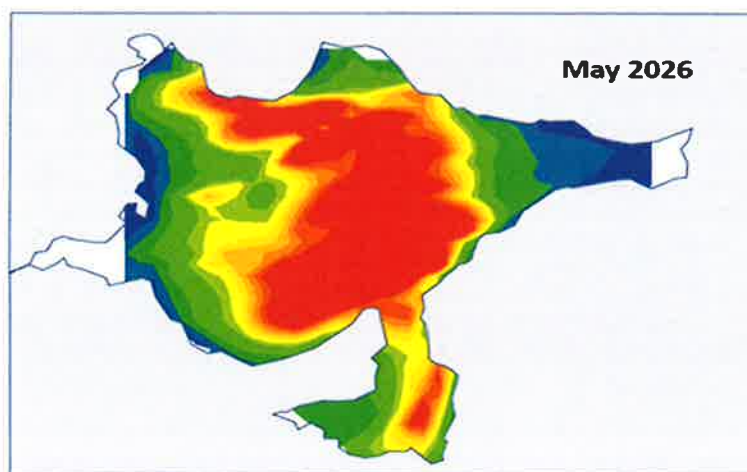
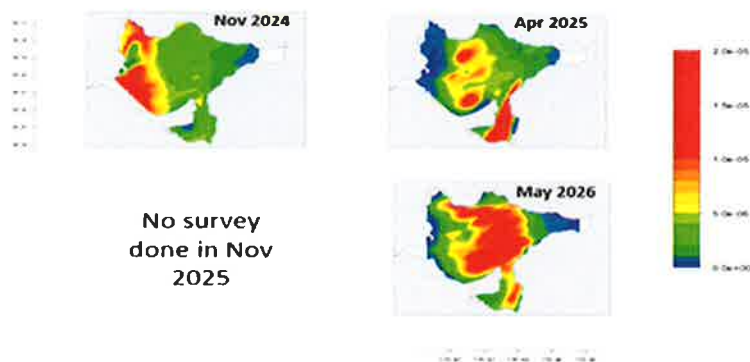
- A large contiguous central area exhibits the highest backscatter class (red).
- Elevated values extend across much of the interior basin.
- Lower values remain confined to peripheral western and eastern margins.
- Southern extension also displays a distinct zone of elevated backscatter.

Interpretation

The extensive high-backscatter zone observed in May 2026 suggests a period of enhanced particulate loading or biological activity affecting a much larger proportion of the study area than in previous surveys. The comparison of the quality (condition and numbers) of the fish caught and/or trapped will reveal the relationship between productivity in autumn and the winter run.



Graph 1. Average back-scattering coefficient measured along 14 transects across Lake Tarawera between Nov 2018 and May 2026. The colour of the boxes in green, yellow, and magenta indicate spring, autumn and summer respectively. The boxes represent the interquartile range (IQR), which is the middle 50% of the data. The bottom of the box indicates the 25th percentile (Q1), and the top indicates the 75th percentile (Q3). The horizontal line represents the median (50th percentile) of the data in each category. The whiskers extend from the box to the minimum and maximum values within 1.5 times the IQR from Q1 and Q3. They help identify the range of the data.



Graph 2. Spatial distribution of back-scattering in Lake Tarawera

1115 Other Lakes Fisheries Investigations

Ngongotaha Stream trap

The Ngongotaha Stream trap was run on four occasions over the winter spawning period for a total of 18 nights. During this period 17 brown trout were retained to use in the hatchery breeding programme. Stream remediation works in August cleared several large tree obstructions upstream of the trap, this will hopefully reduce the likelihood of the trap being non-operational due to damage or obstruction which has been an issue in the past.

	Nights run	Rainbow			Brown		
		Total count	Ave length	Ave weight	Total count	Ave length	Ave weight
May	4	4	490	1.53	41	582	2.96
June	4	12	505	1.58	9	598	2.95
July	3	16	466	1.48	8	561	2.42
September	7	50	475	1.38	4	572	2.35

Angler Diaries

Over the 2025-26 season a total of 95 angler diaries were submitted, 29 of which were submitted via our online survey monkey portal and the remainder via physical copies (all physical copies sent in by one angler on Lake Tarawera). Overall, this is higher than previous 2024-25 season total of 78 entries (34 online & 44 physical).

Lake Matahina	1
Lake Okareka	1
Lake Okataina	3
Lake Rerewhakaaitu	1
Lake Rotoiti	10
Lake Rotorua	7
Lake Tarawera	67
Lake Waikaremoana	1
Kaituna River	1
Ngongotaha stream	1
Ohau channel	1
Waioeka River	1

Angler diaries submitted 01/10/25 - 15/09/26

1116 Waterfowl Harvest Management

Greyland predictions and estimates

Mallard and grey duck (greyland) harvest regulations (season length and bag limit) are dependent on the population size. Season regulation recommendations are required by the end of January. The greyland population size is not known until the game bird season has finished (i.e., in another 8 months) therefore, we need to be able to predict what the population will be. The Eastern Region has 30 years of population data which can be used to determine key variables that drive population change. There are several climate variables that explain changes in population such as winter rainfall, winter temperature, and summer rainfall. Summer rainfall is not available when the regulation recommendations are required so cannot be used.

At the end of 2025 we predicted the 2026 mallard and grey duck (greylard) population would be 257,000 (95% CI 179,898 – 333,693; *Figure 3*). As explained above, the actual greylard population could not be determined until the end of the 2026 game bird season. This has now been completed. The estimated 2026 greylard population was 192,000 (95% BCI 148,500 – 234,700; *Figure 4*), within the confidence intervals of the predicted population.

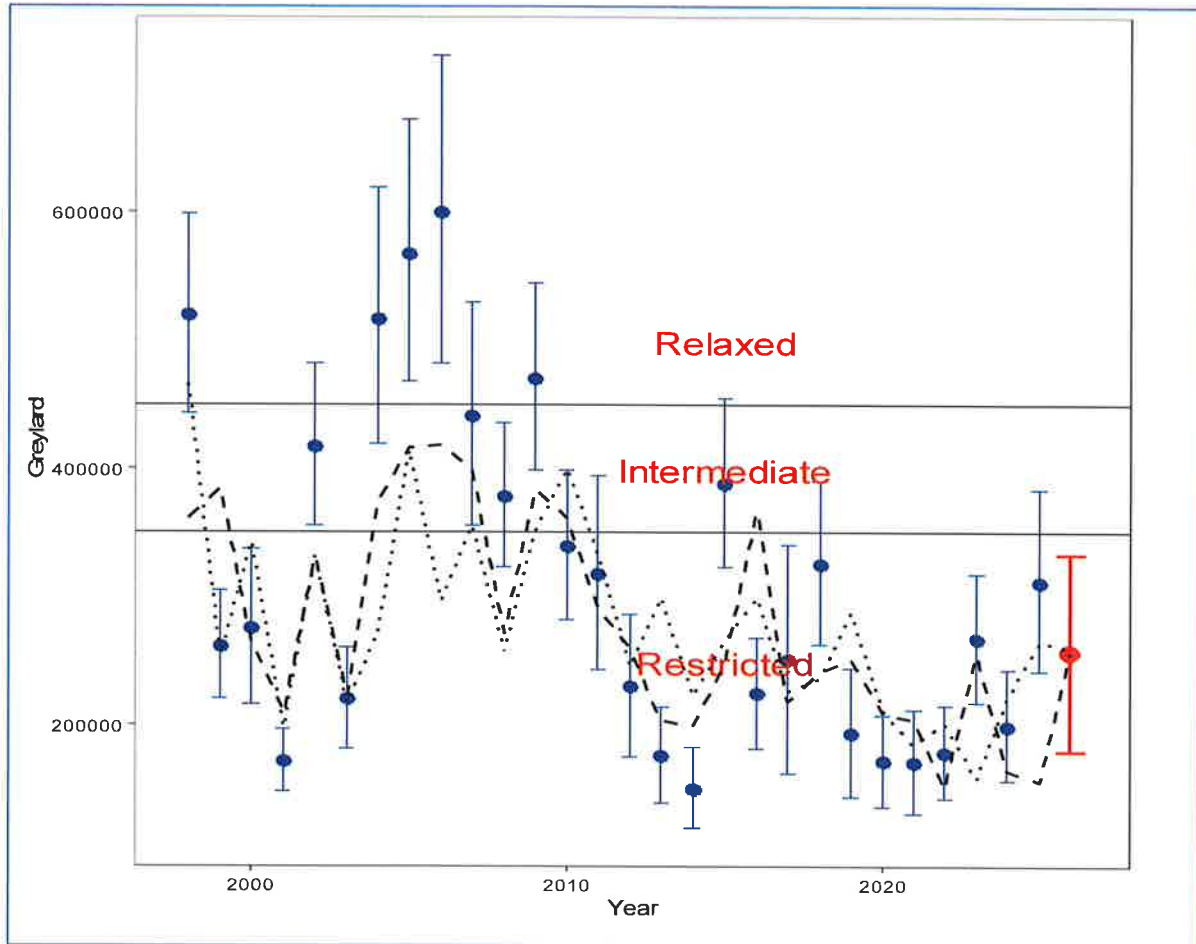


Figure 3. Eastern Region greylard population estimates (blue circles; mean $\pm$ 95% BCI). The red estimate is the 2026 predicted value. The black horizontal lines show the three levels (Relaxed, Intermediate, and Restricted) of harvest regulation constraint (daily bag limit and season length). The dashed black line is the top model ($N_{(t)} = N_{(t-1)} + H + WR + \text{time}$) and the dotted black line is the third top model ($N_{(t)} = WR + WT$) where $N_{(t-1)}$ = the greylard population in 2025, H = the 2025 greylard harvest, WR = the 2025 winter rain, WT = the average daily winter temperature in 2025 and time is the year 2026. The predicted 2026 population is based on the weighted average of both models.

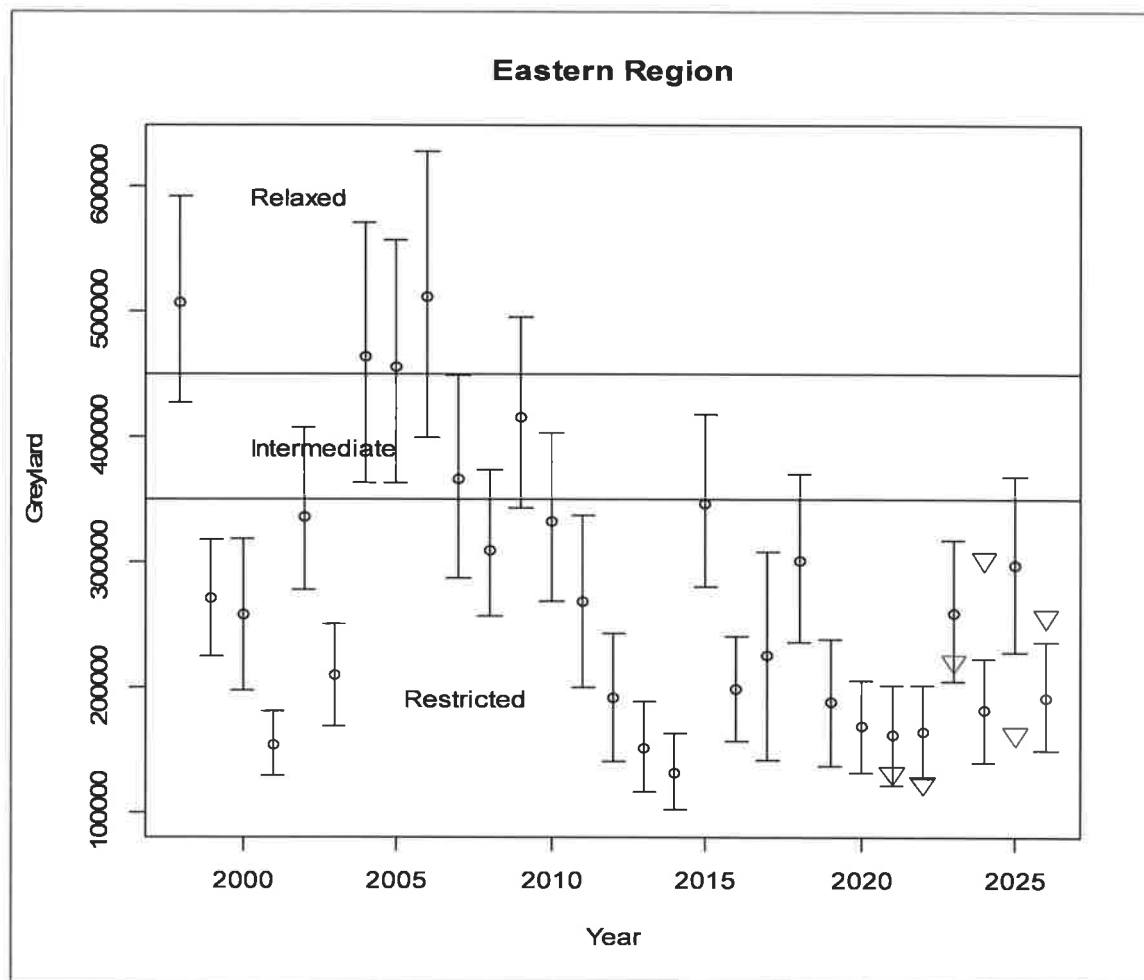


Figure 4. The estimated greylard population (mean $\pm$ 95% Bayesian credible interval). The red nebula are the predicted greylard population 2021 – 2026 (i.e. predicted in December the year prior). The black horizontal lines show the population thresholds that determine a restricted, intermediate or relaxed set of harvest regulations (season length and daily bag limit).

Greylard harvest

The 2026 Eastern Region greylard harvest was the lowest recorded since 1993 (21,938). This can in part be attributed to significantly fewer hunters³, however, the greylard per hour hunting was the fourth lowest recorded. The low greylard per hour is indicative of a poor season with the caveat that the estimates have a large degree of uncertainty associated with them (i.e., wide confidence intervals). Nevertheless, both mallard and grey duck harvest were significantly less than the 2025 season and the lowest and second lowest recorded for mallard and grey duck respectively since 1993.

The annual total harvest of all species, except black swan and paradise shelduck, have declined 1993 – 2026. For mallard the decline in annual total harvest is explained by a decrease in hours spent hunting waterfowl and daily bag limit. The harvest of mallard plus grey duck (greylard) per hour hunting shows a very small but not significant decrease (1993 - 2026). A more detailed report (Hunter Survey) will be supplied to Council in PFI.

¹ In 2026 2,607 adult and junior whole season game bird licences were sold cf. the average for the last 10 years of 3,200 licences.

Shoveler Counts

Fish and Game New Zealand conducted a national count of kuruwhegi, Australasian shoveler duck (*Spatula (Anas) rhynchos*) on 3 August 2026. This is the 27th annual count (2000 – 2026) to monitor change in Australasian shoveler duck population at surveyed sites across New Zealand.

Five indices were examined:

- total national count ($n=277$ survey sites),
- the sum of counts from sites that have been counted every year ($n=70$),
- the number of shoveler counted per site ($n=277$),
- a two-year trend of each site (2025–2026; $n=264$) and,
- a 27-year trend of each site (2000–2025; $n=277$).

Population trends are derived from a regression line, i.e., a linear slope, fitted to the annual (log) count for each site and then the average of all the regression coefficients is back transformed.

The 2026 total count (12,789, $n=277$ sites counted) was the 22nd highest ranked count in the 27 years and similar to last year's count of 12,274 ($n=273$ sites counted).

The long-term trend indicates a small decrease in the population across sites counted (average regression coefficient = -0.039; 95 CI -0.071 – -0.005; $n=277$) and no statistically significant change over the last two years (-0.084; 95% CI -0.284 – 0.124).

A linear regression line fitted to the 70 sites that have been counted every year (27 years) suggest no change in the shoveler population ($\beta_{year} = -19.89$; $P = 0.604$), however annual counts at these sites have fluctuated.

Sex ratios were examined using a chi-squared test. Reported observations of females were significantly fewer ($P<0.0001$) than males with a ratio of 0.57 females to males. This sex imbalance is consistent with ratios from previous years (0.63 females to males; $P<0.001$).

The national survey is an index of population change at surveyed sites. However, count sites are not randomly selected so inference about national and regional shoveler populations must be made with caution.

Indices, and counts, point to either a small decrease or a relatively stable shoveler population at surveyed sites. Regional game bird regulations of shoveler duck therefore are assessed as currently sustainable.

1121 Lake Fisheries Creel Surveys

Summer Creel Surveys

The 2026-27 summer creel survey schedule has been created. This season's surveys are planned to commence on labour weekend and run through to the end of April. The survey will retain coverage of Rotorua's main four lakes (Rotorua, Rotoiti, Okataina and Tarawera) as well as lake Rotorua's stream mouth fishery. Four sessions have also been scheduled at lake Rotoma. During the latest NAS survey Lake Rotoma was one of the few lakes in the region to show a positive trend in angler hours hence the importance in monitoring this fishery. If time and resourcing allow surveys may also be conducted in lesser utilised waters such as Lake Rerewhakaaitu and Lake Okareka. The angler diary program is still in place to help gather

reports and coverage from lesser utilised waters that are beyond the capacity for staff to actively and consistently monitor.

Ohau Creel surveys

As in previous years the 2026-27 Ohau channel creel survey is funded and overseen by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council. Like last year the survey will only run throughout October. All forms, workbooks and survey schedules have been sent out to BOPRC.

1122 Opening Day Angler Survey

Opening day 2026

The 2026 opening day creel survey has been organised and set to go ahead as in previous years. Staff (local and Northland), honorary rangers and volunteers (including a team from DOC Turangi) will be stationed at multiple boat ramps throughout Lakes Tarawera, Okataina and Rotoiti on Thursday 1st October. There will also be a boat team present on both Tarawera and Rotoiti to survey any boats that will not be returning to a staffed ramp. After the 3-month closure this is a great opportunity to assess the state of our lake fisheries, as well as engage with license holders and the local community.

1141 Hatchery Operations

Trapping and collection of brood fish continued, and to date eighty-one quality crosses have been taken for around 346,000 ova. Spring liberations commenced in September.

Fish locations at 23rd September 2026:

Location	Type	Age	Qty (approx.)	Comment
Hatchery	Rt	0+	5,000	Liberations 2026
Tank A	Bt	0+	1,000	Liberation 2026
Tank C	Brook	2+	6	Brood
Tank E	Tiger	1+	500	Liberation 2026
Tank F	Brook	2+	20	Brood (W)
Pond 5	Rt	1+	2,500	Autumn liberations 2026
Pond 6	Rt	1+	6,000	Autumn liberations 2026
Pond 7	Rt	1+	8,000	Autumn liberations 2026
RW1,2	Rt	1+	2,500	2+ for 2026 KF programmes

1143 Te Wairoa trap

In 2026 the Te Wairoa trap ran from 1st April to 27th August. The total number of fish recorded running upstream through the trap was 1,038. This total was much lower than the total number recorded in 2025 (1,997) and the previous 5 years.

The largest fish recorded was 720mm, 5.2kg Lp female (4-year-old). The average size of the fish recorded in 2026 were 610mm and 3.05kg, which was significantly longer (+17mm) and heavier (+420g) than the average size of fish recorded in 2025 ($P < 0.001$ for both variables).

The total number of fish in 2026 ≥ 3.6 kg (8lb) was 194 (18% of trap run), and the total number of fish ≥ 4.5 kg (10lb) was 14 (1.3% of trap run). In 2025 only 26 fish captured were ≥ 3.6 kg and only 1 fish was ≥ 4.5 kg.

The average size of hatchery fish in 2026 was 622mm and 3.21kg, which was significantly longer (+20mm) and heavier (+470g) then the average size of hatchery fish in 2025 ($P<0.001$ for both variables). The average size of wild fish in 2026 was 577mm and 2.60kg, which was significantly longer (+20mm) and heavier (+390g) then the average size of wild fish in 2025 ($P<0.001$).

A total of 129 tagged fish were recorded (12.4% of trap run).

Year	Total run	Wild run	Wild %	Ave length	Ave weight
2022	2,651	715	26.9	553	2.09
2023	1,575	465	29.5	561	2.09
2024	1,948	549	28.2	577	2.52
2025	1,997	426	21.3	593	2.63
2026	1,038	277	26.6	610	3.05

1161 Sports Fish Liberations

Liberations, Eastern region 30th July to 23rd September 2026

Water	Date	Mark	Tag	Species	Age	Qty
Rerewhakaaitu	23/09/2026	Rp	I26	RT	1+	500
Rerewhakaaitu	23/09/2026	Rp		RT	1+	2500
Rotoehu	22/09/2026	Rp	C26	RT	1+	500
Rotoehu	22/09/2026	Rp		RT	1+	1500
Rotoma	16/09/2026	Rp	D26	RT	1+	500
Rotoma	16/09/2026	Rp		RT	1+	2000
Okareka	15/09/2026	Rp		RT	1+	1500
Okareka	15/09/2026	Rp	G26	RT	1+	500
Okataina	11/09/2026	Rp	E26	RT	1+	500
Okataina	11/09/2026	Rp		RT	1+	750
Rotoiti	10/09/2026	Rp		RT	1+	6500
Rotoiti	10/09/2026	Rp	B29	RT	1+	500
Tarawera	8/09/2026	Rp	H26	RT	1+	500
Tarawera	8/09/2026	Rp		RT	1+	3000

Fish were also collected by Auckland Waikato Fish & Game, DoC, Earth Sciences NZ

HABITAT PROTECTION AND MAINTENANCE

1211 RMA Planning

Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Due to upcoming changes in the RMA space, BoPRC has recently put freshwater planning on hold. The Regional Council has recently restarted the RESOF group as they begin to look at future planning documents.

A submission was lodged on some proposed amendments to the Regional Pest Management Plan. No new developments

Waikato Regional Council

In March 2018 Auckland/Waikato and Eastern Fish and Game Council's lodged a joint submission on Waikato Regional Council's Healthy Rivers/Wai Ora: Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1. Council hearings were held mid-2019. Decisions were released in May. Decisions on appeals have been released and A/W is currently considering whether there is merit in further Court processes.

Gisborne District Council

No new RMA planning developments.

Other

Bay of Plenty Regional Council has established a group to provide advice in relation to policy development for NPSFM implementation. Fish and Game is part of this Rural and Environmental Sector Organisation Forum.

The most recent Bay of Plenty Forestry Liaison Group meeting was attended in August.

The NZ RMA team has been very active recently with a number of important workstreams on the go – including development and consultation on Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plans, access, freshwater fish species interaction and passage, water allocation and limit setting, and the development of practice notes, along with a submission on afforestation on Crown Land, and a review of DoC's consultation document on Charging for Access to some Public Conservation Land.

A large upcoming work stream is the development of a new Eastern Region Sports Fish and Game Management Plan to replace our recently expired version. Work on the plan as a whole has temporarily been put on hold due to uncertainty over upcoming changes in Fish and Game reforms. With that in mind, the Minister for Hunting and Fishing has recently granted an operational extension of our existing plan until 30 June 2027. However, there are relevant elements of the upcoming review that will need progressing in the 12 months. Planning how best to produce consistent plans across all regions has been the subject of recent and ongoing discussions within the RMA group. It is anticipated that we will be embarking on this project within the next few months.

Another important workstream involves the Fish and Game reform itself. We have been advised that the Bill is complex, with more than 60 policy changes being introduced alongside the development of a stand-alone Act. The notification of the Bill was originally scheduled for late 2025. There is no confirmed date for notification, but we have been advised that it will not be before the election. While NZC will be submitting on the Bill, we have also been advised that regional councils should also submit individually. In our case, we are continuing to work on a submission that captures those matters which are most important to us, and incorporating feedback provided by our Council. We have also been tasked with compiling some matters for inclusion in the national submission.

A national Fish and Game staff RMA meeting and training session in Wellington was attended in July.

1212 Consent Applications

Date	Authority	Applicant	Type	Resource Involved	Action
29 Jul	HBRC	Juken NZ	LUC- forest harvest	Wairoa River	No concerns email
29 Jul	HBRC	Summit Forest	LUC- install box culverts	2x tribs, Nuhaka River	No concerns email
19 Aug	BOPRC	Armer Farms Ltd	LUC – jetty & retaining wall construction	Okawa Bay, Lake Rotoiti	No concerns email
30 Aug	BOPRC	Manawa Energy	LUC/ WP Wheao Hydro scheme reconsenting	Wheao river and Lake	Conditions imposed
30 Aug	BOPRC	RLC	WP- municipal water supply for Rotorua	Utuhina Stream	Approved
7 Sept	BOPRC	First Gas	LUC- river diversion & groynes install	Waiotahi River	No concerns email

1221 Reserves Management

No significant works have occurred post the game bird hunting season.

Planning is currently underway for spring and summer maintenance activities within all the managed wetlands. Mowing is to commence mid October.

Western hunter access and private race at Kaituna wetland have had the two forestry style security gates erected. Having the entire Kaituna wetland and surrounds fully gated off will hopefully diminish numerous illegal activities in the area. Ballot holder access will remain status quo.

Boundary fencing replacement is required for 270m at the Awaiti wetland. DOC is arranging contractor and we are splitting costs.

We have engaged an engineering contractor to explore alternative water supply options for the Awakaponga wetland, with the solar air lift system repeatedly stolen, and insurance no longer covering the prior design. We are very limited in options with the insurance funds held.

1231 Respond to Landowner Requests for Assistance

One new landowner request for wetland habitat assistance has been received, with a site visit required to explore options. This is a small coastal site close to Thornton WMR.

ANGLER AND HUNTER PARTICIPATION

1311 Maintain & Enhance Access

Further contract work in Kaingaroa Forest at the Ngahuinga public access easement area has been completed. This was maintenance of the riverside tracks.

Work is beginning soon in regard to spring/summer access work. We have worked with Auckland Waikato staff on an angler access and information mapping system which is on the website.

1312 Signage

Landmark poles in the Rotorua Lakes area have been checked and replacements made as required. New signage was also erected on the upstream side of the bridge at the Utuhina/Pukuhangi bridge. Signage updates and maintenance is ongoing.

1331 Electronic Newsletters

Reel Life was produced for September/October covering new season prospects, access, fishing tips, biosecurity, mapping, datawatch etc.

1333 Fish & Game Website

Minor changes were made to the website over this period, including promotion of the children's fishing event.

1334 Social Media

A variety of posts were made to Facebook and Instagram, including news, new season licences sales, fisheries survey, Ohau Wall construction update, TV coverage, pheasant season ending, children's fishing promotion, 4x4 Expo.

1354 Fishing Competitions

No fishing competition permits were processed for the period.

1351 Junior Angler/Hunter Programmes

Children's fishing events were hosted with Rotorua Anglers association in August and September

1371 Fish & Game Huts

Maintenance is up to date at both Waikaremoana Hut and Wairua Hut.

PUBLIC INTERFACE

1411 Statutory Liaison and Political Awareness

It has been a quiet period in this area over the past 2 months. Although we continue and endeavour to keep connections and communications with our stakeholders, invariable it is usually a one-way system at the current stage.

We continue to cement relationships with key operational stakeholders like Rotorua DOC and BOPRC as well as RLC.

1421 Public Communications

Article published in Sun Live and Daily Post online promoting the count down to October opening.

Trout anglers count down to October opener



1441 Public Promotions

Regular postings on Facebook promoting the activities of the team and the great fishing. The NGO Fishing Club (Free Kids Fishing Club – set up by local angler) that we have supported is continuing to receive great traction and lots of FB postings and engagement.

1451 Education

Two educational tours and one Cancer Kids Fishing was completed during the reported period (31 Jul-30 Sept)

COMPLIANCE

1511 Ranging

Ranging continues to be focused on closed waters areas, spawning areas, and other high use areas. This has included the Ngongotaha Stream (open water areas) and the Uthina Stream (closed water areas) as well as other locations in the Rotorua district. Liaison continues with Police in relation to compliance issues as required.

Contacts 2025-2026 year.

2,247 contacts with anglers and hunters have been made for the 2025 – 26 year. Overall compliance is in excess of 98 %.

Contacts: Year 2025-2026 year

Month	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	Last 5 yr average
September	51	35	36	42	54	36
October	718	520	856	627	712	689
November	66	16	161	154	125	83
December	182	182	256	253	166	232
January	352	212	217	150	360	267
February	140	12	117	198	205	124
March	93	111	185	101	140	131
April	238	25	81	13	52	102
May	203	203	175	161	186	208
June	141	52	80	88	81	97
July	57	36	59	47	95	49
August	32	13	29	70	71	33
Total	2,273	1,417	2,252	1,904	2,247	2,051

1521 Ranger Training

A ranger training day was held on 8 August, and included staff and rangers from Eastern, Auckland Waikato, and Northland Regions. This covered field practice and health and safety matters.

1531 Prosecutions

4 offenders currently have active matters pending resolution in relation to 8 offences.

Offences 2025-2026 Year:

For the 2025-26 year to end August we have dealt with 39 offenders for 53 offences as tabled below. This is fewer offenders than the previous year which is mostly the result of dealing with few youth offenders this year.

Offence table 2025-2026 year to date – 01/09/2025 to 31/08/2026

Offence name	Number of offences
Fishing without licence	21
Fishing in closed waters	13
Fish with illegal tackle	2
Fish with more than 1 rod	2
Fails to give details to ranger	1
Gives false details to ranger	2
Obstruct warranted Officer/Ranger	3
Disguised with intent to commit crime of obstruction of rangers	3
Hunt game – gun magazine not restricted to 2 shots	6
Total number of offences	53

Offences Pending Resolution

Offences table – pending resolution as of 31/08/2026

Offence name	Number of offences
Fishing without licence	2
Illegal tackle	1
Disguised with intent to commit crime	3
Total number of offences	6

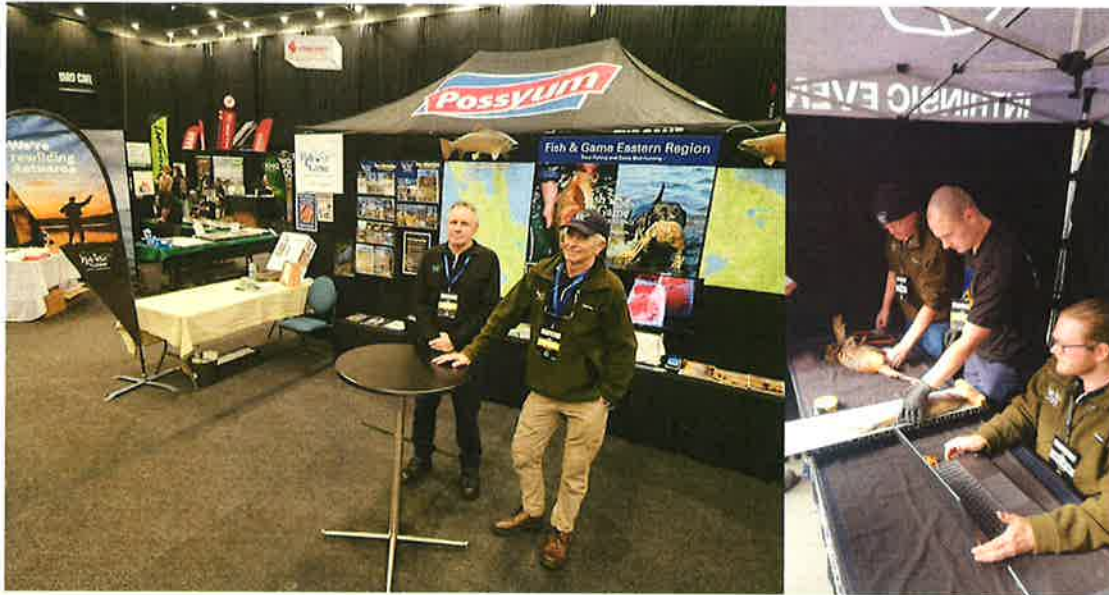
Offence Resolutions for 2025-26 year

Resolution Type	Numbers
Adult – formal warning and education	17
Youth warning and education	6
Prosecution – with diversion	7
Prosecution – without diversion	5
Adult - alternative (Police led Iwi panel)	1
Youth – alternative (Police-Iwi panel)	2
No action – false details given	1
Total	39

PLANNING AND REPORTING

1812 R3 Planning and Business Development

Eastern F&G attended and manned a stand at the Hunting, Fishing and 4x4 Expo held in Rotorua and supported the Big 4 Hunting & Fishing Comp. The stand has been donated free of charge to Eastern F&G by the organisers 'Intrinsic'.



Discussions with local business for sponsorship towards our 'Kids Fishing' has resulted in the Ngongotahā Four Square committing to a \$3,000 sponsorship and an additional \$1,000 donation towards an interactive board we are creating.



1841 NZ Fish & Game Liaison

Licensing

Kate Thompson continues to provide regular sales updates to regions. Recent licensing work has involved reviewing proposed system change requests and reports, collating numbers for magazines, pricing cards and posters for new season, providing NZC with regional end of financial year invoicing requirements for Designated Waters, Salmon Licences and Game Bird Habitat Stamp levies, EDM's for new season promo's, and NZC and regional office queries addressed as required.

Finance

Kate Thompson has also met with an internal Finance Working Group which has been established to provide advice to Regions for year-end reporting and audit requirements. She has updated the financial statements template for use by all regions and contributed to an amended SSP for year-end reporting. Kate continues to provide advice to Regions as needed.

National CLE Liaison Role

This role is continuing led from this region dealing with various matters as they arise.

15.3 LICENCE SALES REPORT

23 September 2026

1. 2025-2026 Fish Licence Sales

- 1.1 Fish licence sales for the 2025-26 season, compared with the 2024-25 season to 31 August, are summarised in Table One.
- 1.2 The final result for the financial year represents a decline of 2.1%, or 188 LEQ's, compared with the 2024-2025 season.
- 1.3 As the 2025-26 budget was set slightly above the 2024-25 actuals, the variance to budget is a decline of 2.9% or 263 LEQ's.

Table One: Fish Licence Sales 2025-26 vs 2024-25 YTD to 31 August

Licence Category	Agency Online	Public Online	Total YTD 2024-25	Agency Online	Public Online	Total YTD 2025-26	Inc/Dec on prior Season
Fish Adult							
Family	867	1,356	2,223	776	1,026	1,802	-421
Season	774	1,172	1,946	792	1,302	2,094	148
Season Non-Resident	98	215	313	87	299	386	73
Loyal Senior	243	300	543	231	303	534	-9
Local Area Adult	858	688	1,546	926	773	1,699	153
Winter Adult	178	301	479	113	318	431	-48
Long Break Adult	19	34	53	18	42	60	7
Short Break Adult	221	812	1,033	168	887	1,055	22
Day	645	3,285	3,930	497	3,056	3,553	-377
Day Non-Resident	405	1,037	1,442	308	1,219	1,527	85
Total Adult	4,308	9,200	13,508	3,916	9,225	13,141	-367
Fish Junior							
Season	211	381	592	209	481	690	98
Season Non-Resident	6	25	31	7	27	34	3
Day	138	455	593	109	527	636	43
Day Non-Resident	18	49	67	13	44	57	-10
Total Junior	373	910	1,283	338	1,079	1,417	134
Fish Child							
Season Non-Resident	2	15	17	2	19	21	4
Day Non-Resident	7	17	24	24	33	57	33
Total Child	9	32	41	26	52	78	37
Total Fish	4,690	10,142	14,832	4,280	10,356	14,636	-196
Whole Season Equivalent (LEQ)			8,929			8,742	-188
Variance between Seasons							-2.1%
\$ (excl GST)			\$1,211,280			\$1,185,830	-\$25,450

Summary 2025-2026 Season YTD Actual vs Total Budget

2025-26 Annual Budgeted FISH LEQs	9,005	100.0%	\$1,221,548
2025-26 Actual	8,742	97.1%	\$1,185,830
Variance to budget	-263	-2.9%	-\$35,718

- 1.4 The increase in non-resident licence sales, along with the decline in resident categories, indicates that the change to the family licence requirements has had an impact on sales. The new requirement for a child to be named on the family licence appears to have contributed to this result.
- 1.5 To 31 August, the family licence category recorded a reduction in value of \$74,316, while individual licence categories increased by \$36,706. This represents a net reduction of \$37,610 ex GST for Eastern Region. Nationally the impact of this change could be estimated at approximately \$295,000. While there may be other contributing factors, the change to the family licence requirements is considered the most likely contributor to the decline, given the concerns raised by many licence holders following its introduction.

2. 2026 Game Licence Sales

- 2.1 Game licence sales for the 2025-26 season, compared with the 2024-25 season to 31 August, are summarised in Table Two.
- 2.2 While the Game Season continues into the new financial year the result to 31 August is a decline of 14.7% (417 LEQ's), compared with the 2024-25 season.
- 2.3 The sales target was set below the 2024-25 recorded sales level as forecasts were based on results from the 2022-23 and 2023-24 seasons due to the timing requirements for establishing budgets. Therefore, the variance to budget is a much smaller decline of 5.9% or 151 LEQ's.
- 2.4 Nationally, Game licence sales are down 3.45% (1,055 LEQ's) as at 31 August compared against the 2024-25 season and are 3.52% (1,176 LEQ's) below budget.

Table Two: Game Licence Sales 2026 vs 2025 YTD results to 31 August

Licence Category	Agency Online	Public Online	Total YTD 2025	Agency Online	Public Online	Total YTD 2026	Inc/Dec on prior Season
Game							
Adult Season	2,335	416	2,751	1,865	482	2,347	-404
Adult Day	18	117	135	14	74	88	-47
Junior Season	210	69	279	183	77	260	-19
Junior Day	4	7	11	3	2	5	-6
Child Season	125	31	156	110	49	159	3
Total Game	2,692	640	3,332	2,175	684	2,859	-473
Whole Season Equivalent (LEQ)			2,834			2,416	-417
Variance between Seasons							-14.7%
\$ (excl GST)			\$273,499			\$233,216	-\$40,283

2026 Annual Budgeted Game LEQs	2,567	100.0%	\$247,771
2026 Actual	2,416	94.1%	\$233,216
Variance to budget	-151	-5.9%	-\$14,555

16. LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

16.1 Conservation Boards

- Bay of Plenty Conservation Board

16.2 Reports from Other Agencies

- Department of Conservation

16.3 Report from New Zealand Council

- Cr Mark Sceats

16.4 Report from the Chair

- Cr Lindsay Lyons

18. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ref: 7.02.01

13 September 2026

1. Purpose

To reconfirm or elect a Chair for the Eastern Fish and Game Council, to elect an appointee to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council, and reconfirm or elect other Eastern Fish and Game Council officers and appointments for the coming year.

2. Background

Each year the Eastern Fish and Game Council elects or reconfirms its appointee to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council in accordance with the Fish and Game Council Elections Regulations 1990 which state the following:

26 Appointment of members of New Zealand Fish and Game Council

- (1) The first meeting of each newly elected Fish and Game Council shall be held not later than 3 weeks after the date the members came into office.*
- (2) At the first meeting of the Council members shall appoint one of their number to be a member of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council.*
- (3) The appointment shall be by majority vote of the Council.*
- (4) Members of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council shall remain in office as long as they remain members of the appointing Fish and Game Council, except that where a majority of the members of the appointing Fish and Game Council pass a resolution that a vote be taken on a new appointment prior to expiry of the term, then a vote shall be taken and the successor shall serve out the remaining period of the term.*

The other positions requiring consideration are that of Chair, Deputy Chair, and the appointment of the staff member as trustee representing Council's interests on the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement (WCEET). Current appointees to these roles are as follows:

- Chair – Cr Lindsay Lyons
- Deputy Chair – Cr Scott Nicol
- Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement (WCEET) trustee – Matthew McDougall

The Eastern Fish and Game Council also appoints an Executive/Managers Performance and Remuneration Committee. This has specific Terms of Reference dealing with the compilation of information for the annual Manager's performance review, and also serves as an initial point of contact for the CEO in the event of issues arising that need to be addressed urgently or in between scheduled meetings of Council. The term of appointment for this Committee is three years commencing at the beginning of each Council term, in this case October 2024 to October 2027. The incumbent Councillors are Lindsay Lyons, Scott Nicol and Mark Sceats.

The objectives of the Waikato (WCEET) trust are detailed in an attachment to this item. Matt's role on the WCEET remains largely technical and involved with the evaluation of funding applications and acting as project manager and advisor for a number of projects. The members of the WCEET are mostly staff from agencies including Fish & Game, DOC, territorial authorities, and Mercury Energy.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That Council elects a New Zealand Council appointee along with members of Council to fill above roles and confirms the ongoing appointment of Matthew McDougall as its representative on the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust.



Trust Purpose

The Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust was established for the following charitable purposes:

- To foster and enhance the sustainable management of the ecological resources in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments;
- To mitigate adverse effects of the operation of the Hydro Scheme on the ecological environments in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments;
- To maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity, the sports fishery and game bird populations in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments through appropriate and sustainable species and habitat management by:
 1. identifying important habitats and/or species;
 2. identifying risks and threats to those identified habitats and/or species;
 3. identifying most practicable means to ameliorate or resolve risks and threats to habitats and species in the catchment;
 4. identifying practical means to enhance important habitats and/or species;
 5. establishing an enduring and beneficial working partnership between Mighty River Power and the Trust.

Trust Objectives

Objectives of the trust are:

- Enhancement of wetland values in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments.
- Enhancement of indigenous biodiversity in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments.
- Enhancement of the sports fishery and game bird population in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments.

Mitigation of any adverse effects of the operation of the Waikato Hydro System on the ecological environments in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments.

19. NZ GAME BIRD HABITAT TRUST BOARD

Ref: 9.01.01

23 September 2026



NEW ZEALAND GAME BIRD HABITAT TRUST BOARD

Prepared by: Robert Sowman, Habitat Trust Board Administrator

The New Zealand Game Bird Trust Board is appointed on a three-year term by the Minister of Hunting & Fishing (or Conservation). The current Board's appointments expire in April 2027.

The purpose of this memo is to commence the process for appointing a new Board.

Therefore, it is recommended that the New Zealand Fish and Game Council invite Fish and Game Councils in November 2026 to nominate suitable candidates to be considered by the NZ Council at its meeting in March 2027.

A six-person membership of the Habitat Trust Board is set out in *section 44F of the Wildlife Act 1953*. It provides for appointments by the Minister of Conservation (*current appointments shown in italics*):

- a) a chairperson (*Andy Tannock*)
- b) 3 persons appointed after consultation with the New Zealand Fish and Game Council (*Andy Garrick, Chantal Whitby, Mark Sutton*)
- c) 1 person appointed after consultation with the Director-General (*Erin Garrick*)
- d) 1 person appointed after consultation with the Board of Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Incorporated (*Neil Candy*).

In proposing nominations, a Fish and Game Council can submit names from within or outside its region – either previous or new nominees. Without ruling out Fish & Game staff, it is noted that these people already play an important role within the Habitat Trust grant allocation process as initiators, referees and advisers to projects.

On receiving names of suitable candidates, the New Zealand Council needs then to consider this feedback and make its selection of three people to best reflect a diverse set of nominees with some continuity to the Board's current structure and processes. It may also endorse a name for Chairperson.

Recommendations

It is recommended Fish & Game Councils be invited to:

- a) include names of eligible candidates by 28 February 2027 for selection by the New Zealand Fish and Game Council, and
- b) to provide the names of three nominees to recommend to the Minister of Conservation by April 2027.

20. PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION

Ref: 9.01.01

17 September 2026

1. Purpose

To discuss Eastern Fish & Game's CEO's Performance Review

2. Background

To discuss confidential employee matters.

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

GENERAL SUBJECT OF EACH MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED	REASON FOR PASSING THIS RESOLUTION IN RELATION TO EACH MATTER	GROUND(S) UNDER SECTION 48(1) FOR THE PASSING OF THIS RESOLUTION
CEO's Performance Review.	Good reason to withhold exists under section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982	Section 48(1)(a)(ii): That the public conduct of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist.

This resolution is made in reliance on Section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by Section 9 of that Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public are as follows:

ITEM	REASON UNDER ACT	SECTION	PLAIN ENGLISH REASON
Protect the privacy of natural persons.	Sec. 9(2)(a)	Information provided identifies a particular person or can easily be connected with a particular person.	Once the person to whom the information relates consents to its disclosure.
Protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence ... where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.	Sec 9(2)(ba)(i)	Disclosing the information would jeopardise the relationship with the supplier because the supplier may no longer trust the Council to hold its information in confidence.	Not unless there is a public interest in disclosure of the specific information.

Note: Section 48(4) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 provides as follows:

"(4) Every resolution to exclude the public shall be put at a time when the meeting is open to the public, and the text of that resolution (or copies thereof):

- Shall be available to any member of the public who is present; and
- Shall form part of the minutes of the Council."

3. Resolutions

3.1 That pursuant to Section 48 (1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, the public be excluded at ... pm from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely, to discuss Confidential staff matters.

3.2 That Council moves out of public excluded at ... pm.

3.3 That the public be re-admitted to the meeting at ... pm.