

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 154th MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW
ZEALAND ON WEDNESDAY 21st OCTOBER 2015 AT 12.00PM**

Present

Murray Ferris, Lindsay Lyons, Barry Roderick, Michael Little, Terry Wood, Neal Hawes, Laurence Allingham, Annaka Davis, Peter Storey, and Steve Luscombe.

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson, Eben Herbert, Matthew McDougall, John Meikle, Matt Osborne, Lloyd Gledhill, Mark Sherburn, Anthony van Dorp, Lynne Sands (Eastern Fish & Game); Pete Shepherd (Department of Conservation, arrived 12.18pm); and Ken Coombes (newly elected Councillor).

1.0 WELCOME

1.1 Cr Murray Ferris opened the meeting at 12.00pm and welcomed Councillors, staff, and Ken Coombes.

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 Apologies were received from Crs Terry Sutton and Steve Scragg; Kim Alexander and Helen Neale (Department of Conservation); Colin Paton (T/T Conservation Board); and Ray Bushell.

2.2 *Agreed (Mike Little/Terry Wood) that the apologies for the 154th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [15/10/2.2]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (19 AUGUST 2015)

3.1 *Agreed (Neal Hawes/Lindsay Lyons) that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th August 2015 are confirmed as true and correct. [15/10/3.1]*

3.2 There were no resolutions identified for inclusion in Council Policy.

4.0 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Cr Terry Wood queried whether Councillor attendance at meetings was recorded, and whether there was a specified number of meetings that must be attended before it affected an individual's right to stand for Council. Andy Garrick advised that yes attendance over the course of the year is recorded in the annual report, and that there was no specified minimum number of meetings that must be attended, but the Minister could remove a Councillor from office for inability to perform the functions of office, neglect of duty, or misconduct amongst other things. Council discussed issues that impacted on attendance and these revolved primarily around employment, changes of employment, and health. Cr Neal Hawes suggested a change to the date of the November meeting to suit those with work commitments. Andy Garrick informed Council that the meeting could be brought forward a day or two but this would also result in absentees. Cr Murray Ferris suggested that the proposed timing of Council meetings be reviewed with the incoming Council.

4.2 Cr Neal Hawes queried Agenda Item 7.1 regarding the row boats at Lake Waikareiti advising that he had read an article in the latest AA Directions Magazine indicating

their availability. Andy Garrick advised that he was not aware of this and requested a copy of the article for information.

5.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

- Lindsay Lyons - Non-resident licence income.
- Lindsay Lyons - Governors workshop for incoming Council.
- Terry Wood - Kaingaroa forest.

6.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

6.1 Cr Barry Roderick registered his potential conflict of interest over items within the agenda relating to the Waewaetutuki wetland and his prior relationship with the Tauranga Acclimatisation Society.

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

7.1 Cr Lindsay Lyons introduced the purpose of the environmental scan as implemented by the New Zealand Council, and commented on the types of topics or issues that Councillors might wish to raise. Cr Annaka Davis queried why these discussions could not occur within the priorities section of the meeting, and Andy Garrick advised that there may be items or issues that have arisen following distribution of the agenda. Cr Murray Ferris noted that care should be taken to avoid duplicating discussions which end up extending the length of meetings.

7.2 Cr Barry Roderick spoke of his concern over the number of people that had advised him that they had not received voting papers for the October election of Council. Cr Annaka Davis also expressed her disappointment stating that this seemed to occur at every election. Questions were raised as to why every adult season licence holder was not automatically sent voting papers. Kate Thompson advised that under the Fish and Game Council Elections Regulations licence holders are required to indicate their desire to vote, and that this was done either by ticking and signing a panel within the licence book, or by ticking a box (do you wish to enrol) for the online system. She noted that a number of the queries received within the office had been from people who had been issued with paper licences who, presumably, hadn't ticked the box. There was also an opportunity for agents selling via the online system to bypass this question by selecting "No". It was acknowledged that some agents may not have a good understanding of what Fish and Game Councils do and the importance of elections, and this is something that should be addressed. Andy Garrick agreed that there were a number of issues identified from the election process, and that a review and further discussion of these should occur at the February meeting. Ken Coombes added that through his previous work with a Hunting & Fishing store, while staff were aware of elections and Fish & Game Councils and what they do, 95% of licence buyers were not.

8.0 COUNCIL PRIORITIES

8.1 *Angler and Hunter Access:* Cr Terry Wood asked how the new Health and Safety Work Act 2015 coming into effect on 4 April 2016 would impact on the children's fishing days. Andy Garrick advised that we were already committed through current legislation to identify hazards and means of mitigating these, and that Carmel Veitch and staff have been in the process of reviewing all aspects of our site and operations, and that will include also, the children's fish out events. He said that we have an

obligation to identify, record, evaluate, and minimise or eliminate risks if we could, and that a Health and Safety meeting is conducted every Monday morning in conjunction with staff meetings. Andy Garrick added we were still unclear of what the new legislation meant for access across private land by staff and honoraries, and potential liabilities for both staff and Council, and that we would continue to liaise with Robert Sowman and National Office to establish what is actually intended.

8.2 *Enhancing Habitat for Greylard Production:* Cr Barry Roderick informed Council that the drain surveys that he had conducted to date did not indicate an increase in broods on last year. In contrast, Matt McDougall advised that the work he and Brigitta Nieuwboer had been undertaking suggested otherwise, and that they had observed many broods from brand new to fledging stage. Gisborne based Cr Murray Ferris commented on the recent significant rain event in Gisborne, and concerns over flooding of nests. Cr Barry Roderick had received advice from farmers that pukeko had been seen nailing ducklings. Cr Steve Luscombe confirmed that three broods on his property had been completely wiped out by pukeko. Matt McDougall said that pukeko had not previously been considered a widespread issue, but more recently he was receiving more frequent reports about them.

8.3 Cr Steve Luscombe queried the likelihood of a change in policy following a submission from three Awaiti ballot holders requesting an extension of their term from three to six years. Andy Garrick felt that it warranted discussion as it is beyond staff means to maintain these areas to acceptable levels, and incentives of this kind for habitat enhancement works would be one way of achieving the outcomes we need. Discussion of the pros and cons covered he following;

- Requirement of ballot process to rebuild and maintain.
- Longer stand occupancy may promote more effort.
- Not convinced longer term would help as those who do the work would continue to and those who don't still won't.
- Could consider a two tier approach but this could be construed as favouritism.
- Frequency of stand inspections.
- Varying degrees of standards between hunters.
- Uncomfortable for staff if left to their discretion and therefore need parameters, council support, and some flexibility.
- Some reserves require a lot more work than others.
- Three year term based on costs, and this the fairest way.
- Privilege of three years hunting sufficient to expect a reasonable job.

Cr Terry Wood raised his concern over the presence of dilapidated maimai on public land such as Lake Rerewhakaaitu. Matt McDougall advised that by Gazette these structures were required to be removed at the end of the season. Being able to pin down those who built them is problematic, and Fish & Game does not have the resources to remove them. Eben Herbert felt that as a responsible organisation Fish & Game should review its approach to the issue.

8.4 *Maximising Fishery Opportunities:* Cr Terry Wood requested an update on the "Wall". Matt Osborne reported on the recent site inspection undertaken with interested parties, and noted that there were three 'channels' intercepted by the wall. A fish passage facility could be installed at two of these towards the southern end of the wall. It should be relatively easy to remove sections of the wall at these locations and insert fish passage structures into these. Matt noted that parts of the wall were corroding quite badly now.

- 8.5 Cr Barry Roderick commented on the great opening day on October 1, and the excitement that the red tag promotion had generated. He thanked Mark Sherburn and Lynne Sands for the extra work it had generated for them. Cr Lindsay Lyons suggested that with opening falling on a Saturday next year it would be great to run a similar event. Cr Annaka Davis asked whether the outcomes had been published within the media as she had not seen anything. Andy Garrick confirmed that results had been published and Cr Murray Ferris suggested that an email be sent to all participants.
- 8.6 Cr Lindsay Lyons spoke to his idea of increasing interest and participation at the Rotorua lake front by releasing trout there to help establish winter shoreline opportunities. Lindsay suggested that there were also opportunities to promote the area of the Utuhina Stream between Lake Road and the Boys High School. Matt Osborne advised that the lake front area is close to the Utuhina, there are silting issues there, and the commercial and other activity constantly present isn't likely to make it a good fishing prospect. We could consider introducing gravels to the area, but with its northerly aspect it's likely these would silt up quickly, and it's more probable that fish would head to the Utuhina anyway. John Meikle noted that as a consequence of the Lake Road upgrade the old bridge buttresses have gone, and the fishery has gone too. John suggested we could talk to the Rotorua Lakes Council about installing some in-stream structures to re-create the riffles that had been present. Cr Neal Hawes supported an investigation of this idea, and also queried the possibility of releasing brown trout to Lakes Okaro, Rerewhakaaitu, and Okareka to increase shoreline opportunities. Cr Lindsay Lyons advised that unfortunately the legislation and agreements we operate under prohibits the release of trout species into waters where they have never been previously. Andy Garrick advised that we could make an application to do so, but the process would be involved and unlikely to result in the outcome sought. Eben Herbert added that it would not be a simple process of making an application to the Permissions Office of the Department of Conservation as several documents would need to be reviewed including our Sports Fish and Game Management Plan, and our Memorandum of Understanding with the department.

9.0 2016 GAME SEASON CONDITIONS

- 9.1 Andy Garrick opened the discussion asking Council to review the information provided and identify any additional items or issues it wanted discussed at the next meeting. Cr Murray Ferris commented on the hotly debated hen pheasant subject, and asked whether Fish & Game had received any feedback. Matt McDougall advised that feedback had been received from the Wildfowlers. Cr Laurence Allingham confirmed that the Wildfowlers had very strong feelings over the subject and he understood that they were preparing a petition. Cr Neal Hawes queried the hen/cock ratio, and discussion followed in which it was noted that the overall ratio is believed to be in the order of 50/50 though there are usually a number of hens seen with one cock during the game season. Matt McDougall noted that when pheasants were first introduced, a conscious decision was made not to harvest hens as they were easily identifiable and this was a time when populations were still establishing. Crs Mike Little and Laurence Allingham pointed out that pheasant populations are dependent on natural breeding as numbers are not being supplemented by the release of captive reared birds as they once were. Matt McDougall said while this argument stood a number of years ago it was not so applicable now, and noted that the females of all other species are hunted. John Meikle questioned the underlying reasons for allowing a hen pheasant

harvest and noted that if it was to provide opportunity it would be far better to offer it mid season than on opening weekend. Cr Murray Ferris said it was concerned in part with easing of regulations and opening up opportunities, and Cr Lindsay Lyons noted it was a way of introducing newbies and new dogs to the pursuit. Murray commented no one was obliged to shoot hens if they didn't agree with it, that we should be basing decisions around science and logic, and if there was a good reason not to allow a limited ongoing harvest of hens we can always reverse the regulation allowing it.

9.2 Matt McDougall raised the topic of cultural harvest of species such as paradise shelduck. Andy Garrick commented it would be useful for Council to develop a policy for responding to such a request should it be received, and added that in light of the Crown/Tuwharetoa Agreement in Principle for the Tongariro National Trout Centre it should probably extend to sports fish as well. Andy advised staff would prepare a paper in the New Year for Council to consider.

9.3 Matt McDougall informed Council that he had spoken to Auckland Waikato Fish & Game staff regarding the effect of pinning shot guns and to date they have been unable to measure outcomes. Eben Herbert advised that he had looked into it and there was not a great deal of literature about it overseas. He also noted that some regions have chosen to do it in order to reduce crippling rates but there seemed to be no science backing that theory. Matt McDougall had contacted other regions and had received no feedback. Cr Murray Ferris noted that there is a belief amongst hunters that he has spoken to that this region is requiring guns to be pinned also. Cr Barry Roderick suggested that it would be good to see standardised conditions with our neighbouring regions more generally. Matt McDougall noted that it is difficult to standardise all conditions because within our own region alone these vary, e.g. bag limits for some species. To align with Auckland Waikato and Hawke's Bay regions would be even more difficult with such diverse environments.

9.4 Cr Barry Roderick queried whether the effects of pond feeding had been looked into, and should it be allowed in the future. He also asked whether Council should consider placing a limit on hen mallards? Matt McDougall said that he had reviewed feeding effects 5-6 years ago through the hunter survey and there appeared to be no statistical difference in birds harvested. He said we could redo the study if required. He also said that a previous drake mallard regulation was a most unpopular regulation due to the extreme difficulty in determining the sex of a mallard in the air. Discussion followed on the potential benefits of encouraging the taking of mallard drakes rather than limiting the take of hens.

9.5 Cr Barry Roderick commented on a number of horticultural properties in his area that are up for sale that have provided 'defacto' refuges for ducks. He suggested there might be an opportunity to approach owners and investigate whether some of these sites could be gazetted as closed game areas.

10.0 INFORMATION FOR THE 2014-2015 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

10.1 Kate Thompson provided a brief overview of the Council's draft Annual Report advising that a more detailed paper would be included in the November meeting agenda. Cr Murray Ferris advised that at this time the audited accounts would also be available.

10.2 *Agreed (Terry Wood/Neal Hawes) that Council receives the draft reports comprising the Statement of Service Performance, Chairman's report and draft Financial Statements for the 2014-2015 year. [15/10/10.2]*

11.0 WAIKAREMOANA SPORTS FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT FUND

- 11.1** *Agreed (Mike Little/Steve Luscombe) that Council approves proposed expenditure from the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement fund relating to the Water Quality Monitoring Buoy servicing, the Lake Waikaremoana Lagarasiphon Incursion Programme (\$39,000), and the continuation of surveys and monitoring of key spawning tributaries and access initiatives in the upper Waikaretaheke (\$19,000 less costs for servicing the monitoring buoy). [15/10/11.1]*

12.0 LIAISON OFFICER REPORTS

12.1 Tongariro-Taupo Conservation Board

Not represented and no report received.

12.2 East Coast/Bay of Plenty Conservation Board

Not represented and no report received.

12.3 Department of Conservation, Central North Island Region

Pete Shepherd thanked Fish & Game for enabling DOC staff to assist during the recent Rotorua Lakes Opening Day saying that they were keen to maintain a good working relationship with Fish & Game. He said that they had seen the highest fish counts since early the 2000s through their traps, and that it appeared that the early runs had re-established. Pete said that the full results were yet to come and that overall fishing had been good. Cr Murray Ferris asked whether the department was looking at its licence categories. Pete confirmed that they are going through a process, but with further restructures recently this has been delayed. Cr Barry Roderick advised that he had received reports from colleagues that the winter fishing had been great and that they were very happy, and asked whether DOC licence sales were on the up. Pete said that yes sales were up, but due to a higher number of lower valued licences being sold, overall revenue was down. He noted that the new online system would provide more insight into licence sales trends. Eben Herbert advised that he had interviewed a number of Taupo anglers on opening day who had also stated that the fishing had been good. Andy Garrick acknowledged and noted his appreciation for the assistance that the DOC team had provided on opening of the Rotorua lakes, and more recently with fin clipping one day.

12.4 Report from the New Zealand Council

Lindsay Lyons' report had been pre-circulated and Lindsay spoke briefly about the need to simplify regulations across the regions and the protection of our waters through Water Conservation Orders. Cr Terry Wood queried progress with the Overseas Investment Office (OIO) in relation to the sale of the cutting rights to Kaingaroa Forest. Andy Garrick said we had seen this as an opportunity to revisit access issues, but from information recently received it appeared that the deal had been completed and it was his understanding there was no longer an opportunity to revisit through the OIO process. Cr Terry Wood queried whether a steering committee should be established to approach the new group. Andy Garrick advised that the best course of action would be to allow staff to initiate enquiries and meet with owners, and that this was on our agenda.

13.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- 13.1** Cr Neal Hawes commented on the low percentage of datawatch returns from lakes Okataina and Rotoiti compared to Tarawera and queried whether this was normal? Matt Osborne confirmed that this year had seen low returns and a very hard summer's fishing, and that Tarawera returns had always been higher than others. Neal asked if

this could be an indication of survival and Matt Osborne responded advising that Okataina had seen low usage due to lake levels affecting access, while Rotoiti returns were typically lower than Tarawera due to the population comprising a higher proportion of wild fish. He said that overall return rates were not high and queried whether more incentive to return was needed.

- 13.2 Cr Neal Hawes also queried the higher percentage of wild fish through the Te Wairoa trap and the reduction in their average weight. Matt Osborne advised that the wild fish run through the trap was earlier this year (in contrast to the run in the Tarawera Outlet), and favourable conditions prevailing when they were juveniles may have improved the survival of these fish. Cr Barry Roderick questioned whether the high percentage of wilds through the trap had brought the overall average weight of fish down. Matt confirmed that this was correct as wild fish are typically smaller than hatchery reared trout though hatchery reared fish were also slightly smaller this year. Cr Lindsay Lyons asked whether three years of algal blooms could be affecting fish size. Matt advised that he believed it could be as foraging effort and food intake can be affected by water clarity. Cr Peter Storey noted that there had been blooms historically, but Lindsay Lyons suggested that these appeared to have been more prevalent in the last three years.

13.3 *Agreed (Mike Little/Terry Wood) that Council receives the Management and Finance Reports, and approves the payments for July and August 2015 totalling \$287,411.70. [15/10/13.3]*

- 13.4 Kate Thompson provided a brief update on licence sales commenting on the small increase seen in the 2014-15 results over 2013-14, and the early interest in the new licence categories. Cr Neal Hawes queried whether a further review of licence categories would occur as he had heard a number of requests for a family licence for loyal seniors. Kate Thompson provided a run down on the processes leading up to the implementation of the new categories and the time involved with this. She advised that early results had seen a decline in sales for a number of regions as the high number of early season discounted sales had brought the overall results down. Andy Garrick said that he expected a full review to occur with the current categories and that changes, if any, would only be considered following this.

13.5 *Agreed (Mike Little/Terry Wood) that Council receives the report on licence sales. [15/10/13.5]*

14.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

- 14.1 Cr Lindsay Lyons advised that the New Zealand Council had voted to retain non-resident licence reserves within the regions, but with some regions achieving very few licence sales, consideration needed to be given to supplementing those regions falling into this category that have significant back country fisheries. He wanted to give Council a heads up that a proposal to contribute 1% of non-resident revenue to small regions with significant back country waters such as the West Coast was on the cards.
- 14.2 Cr Lindsay Lyons suggested inviting Robert Sowman to present at a Governance Workshop for the new Council early next year. Council supported this suggestion.
- 14.3 Cr Terry Wood again raised the suggestion of establishing a steering committee to deal with Kaingaroa access issues. Crs Lindsay Lyons and Murray Ferris expressed caution as Council is answerable to the Minister for its actions and this is a delicate situation which needs to be dealt with appropriately. Andy Garrick advised the Eastern Region has staff who are appropriately qualified to deal with this and other

ongoing access issues, and would keep Council informed of progress and any assistance it might need.

15.0 PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION

15.1 Agreed (Mike Little/Lindsay Lyons) that pursuant to Section 48 (1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, the public be excluded at 2.48pm from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely a discussion on Eastern Region's future relationship with the Hawke's Bay Region. [15/10/15.1]

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
6.3.1.1 Discussion on staffing and management matters.	Good reason to withhold exists under section 7 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987	Section 48(1)(a)


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 6 or Section 7 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
16.3.1.1	Protect the privacy of natural persons including that of deceased natural persons	Sec. 7(2)(a)	To allow Council to have frank discussion about issues relating to employment of staff.

15.2 Agreed (Murray Ferris/Laurence Allingham) that the public be readmitted to the meeting at 3.31. [15/10/15.2]

16.0 MEETING CLOSED

16.1 The meeting was closed at 3.31pm.



 Murray Ferris,
 Chairman

18/11/15

 Date

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

2.0 APOLOGIES

- 2.2 *Agreed (Mike Little/Terry Wood) that the apologies for the 154th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [15/10/2.2]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (19 AUGUST 2015)

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