

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 180th MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW
ZEALAND ON TUESDAY 11th FEBRUARY 2020 AT 12.00PM**

Present

Crs Murray Ferris, Barry Roderick, Lindsay Lyons, Laurance Tamati, Ngahi Bidois, Geoff Thomas, Alan Baird, Ken Coombes and Debbie Oakley.

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson, Matt McDougall, Anthony van Dorp, Lynne Sands, John Meikle, Nigel Simpson, Eben Herbert, Matt Osborne, Mark Sherburn, and Lloyd Gledhill (Eastern Fish & Game).

1.0 WELCOME AND KARAKIA

1.1 Cr Murray Ferris (Chairman) opened the meeting at 12.00pm, and Cr Ngahi Bidois performed an opening Karakia.

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 Apologies were received from Crs David Woolner and Adam Rayner; Carmel Veitch (Eastern Fish & Game); Ken Raureti (Bay of Plenty Conservation Board); and Dave Conley (Department of Conservation).

2.2 *Agreed (Alan Baird/Ngahi Bidois) that the apologies for the 180th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [20/02/2.2]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (5 DECEMBER 2019)

3.1 *Agreed (Ngahi Bidois/Alan Baird) that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2019 be confirmed as a true and correct record subject to the following adjustments:*

15.4 “Agreed (Barry Roderick/Adam Rayner)” amend to “Agreed (Barry Roderick/Alan Baird)”

15.5 “Agreed (Barry Roderick/Adam Rayner)” amend to “Agreed (Barry Roderick/Alan Baird)” [20/02/3.1]

4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY

4.1 No items were identified for inclusion in Council policy.

5.0 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Cr Murray Ferris asked whether the reason for the drop off in the number of ballots applied for this season had been identified? Matt McDougall advised that there had been a number of late applications since last reported and these had filled some of the vacant spots. He noted that the stands still vacant were at sites that did not shoot particularly well and this may have been a contributing factor.

6.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

- Cr Barry Roderick - Upper Motu
- Cr Geoff Thomas - Council social gathering
- Cr Ngahi Bidois - Tangaroa fishing licence
- Andy Garrick - Update from Matt McDougall re black swan
- Andy Garrick - Update from Anthony van Dorp on Arms Legislation reform

7.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

7.1 Crs Barry Roderick and Lindsay Lyons registered their potential conflicts of interest in relation to Agenda Item 14 “Kaituna Wildlife Management Reserve Stand No 5”, due to their personal relationship they held with the late Ray Bushell and his family, and because in Lindsay’s case he had shot from this stand himself in recent years. For this reason, both would abstain from voting on any Council recommendations relating to this item.

8.0 APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS AND OTHER POSITIONS FOR 2020

8.1 Cr Murray Ferris left the Chair and Andy called for nominations for the position of Chair.

8.2 *Moved (Murray Ferris/Lindsay Lyons) that Cr David Woolner be nominated for Council Chair. [20/02/8.2]*

8.3 There were no further nominations and following David Woolner’s earlier confirmation that he was happy to take on the position, David was declared Council Chairman.

8.4 Nominations were called for the position of New Zealand Council appointee.

8.5 *Moved (Murray Ferris/Ken Coombes) that Lindsay Lyons be nominated for NZ Council appointee. [20/02/8.5]*

8.6 There were no further nominations and Cr Lindsay Lyons was declared NZ Council appointee.

8.7 Lindsay advised that if anyone was keen to take on the role he may be relinquishing it in a couple of months’ time.

8.8 Council discussed the need for a Deputy Chair and decided that this position was required as on more than a few occasions the deputy had needed to step up to fill the role in the absence of the Chair. Nominations were then called for the position of Deputy Chair.

8.9 *Moved (Barry Roderick/Murray Ferris) that Cr Ngahi Bidois be nominated for Council Deputy Chair. [20/02/8.9]*

8.10 There were no further nominations, and upon Ngahi’s acceptance of the role he was declared Council Deputy Chair.

8.11 Cr Murray Ferris informed Council that he and Cr Barry Roderick wished to step down from their role on the Manager’s Performance and Remuneration Committee and that this would leave two positions to be filled. Council confirmed that Crs David Woolner and Lindsay Lyons would remain on the committee, and supported the appointment of Crs Ngahi Bidois and Debbie Oakley to fill the vacant positions.

9.0 GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR THE 2020-2021 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

9.1 Andy Garrick advised that this meeting provided Council with the opportunity to review its current priorities, and whether it wished to take these forward into the 2020-21 Operational Work Planning (OWP) process or wanted changes in direction. He noted that the agenda item provided an overview of the existing priorities and outlined the 2020-21 planning process and associated timeframes. Based on today’s discussion, a draft 2020-21 OWP and budget would be formulated by staff to meet the NZ Council agenda deadline for submission of regional budgets and any proposed contestable funding applications or notifications for use of reserves (which fell prior to Council’s next scheduled meeting). Council would however, have the opportunity at its next

- meeting in April to review and amend these as it saw fit, prior to the joint meeting of managers and the NZ Council where these matters were to be considered.
- 9.2 Cr Murray Ferris reminded Council that when considering areas where new projects are desired Council also needed to think about what would need to be given up in order to fund and/or resource the new projects.
- 9.3 Cr Barry Roderick expressed concern over the loss of opportunity and licence revenue resulting from the very restricted access to the Kaingaroa Forest river fisheries. He felt that Eastern Region is lacking in summer fly fishing opportunities, and asked whether Fish & Game should be requesting assistance from Kaingaroa Timberlands to open up and improve access to alternative areas such as the upper Rangitaiki and Whirinaki rivers as a means of mitigating the loss of access to prime summer fishing within the Kaingaroa forest. Anthony van Dorp provided an update on the ongoing discussions with the forest managers and the difficulties we have in gaining more access for anglers when the owners of the land were also subject to the same restrictions. Cr Ngahi Bidois advised Council that he would be happy to share some information and background about how some other groups are managing access permissions with forest managers as he had some experience with such groups himself. Barry also queried the possibility of completing access projects through hydro generators' mitigation funds and provided the Ohaaki development and assistance provided by Contact Energy as an example of this. Andy Garrick advised that Cr David Woolner had also requested his support for increasing access and opportunities be conveyed to Council.
- 9.4 Cr Lindsay Lyons spoke of the great fishing opportunities available in the upper Waimana but noted also, that anglers appeared to be unwelcome there and asked if attempts could be made to negotiate greater access with the local community. Council discussed the matter briefly and asked that staff give further consideration to the issues raised. The discussion ended with the suggestion that Cr Ngahi Bidois, Andy Garrick and Anthony van Dorp could meet to discuss these matters in more detail.
- 9.5 Cr Lindsay Lyons commented on the significant funding spent undertaking trend counts and aerial transect counts each year and queried whether these needed to be done every year? He understood that mallards were often difficult to see with varying light levels and environmental factors determining where they sit and wondered if it was worthwhile doing these annually or whether biennial counts would be sufficient? Matt McDougall provided some background to the aerial mallard counts, which were being undertaken by a number of Fish & Game regions. He said staff have raised some questions around how useful they are as currently undertaken, but suggested five years data would be needed before meaningful conclusions could be reached and felt this was necessary before any decision was made to reduce or drop the counts altogether. Matt added that Fish & Game has a legal obligation to monitor populations and felt that Council needs to be very cautious about cutting back on its monitoring programmes. Andy Garrick noted that in light of falling licence income and increasing costs, the reality may be we'll be unable to continue to undertake the level of monitoring that we have been in recent years, and some hard decisions may need to be taken.
- 9.6 Cr Barry Roderick queried the possibility of undertaking pheasant call counts in areas treated with 1080 as there was a feeling amongst some of our stakeholders that this was having a detrimental impact on populations. Matt McDougall provided a brief explanation of how we go about call counts and advised that no real difference had been identified between 1080 and non 1080 blocks in past surveys.
- 9.7 Cr Barry Roderick commented on the significant time involved with winter creel surveys, and whether this was warranted given the declining number of winter anglers

out there doing it. He wondered whether it might be appropriate to reduce the winter surveys and instead spend more time on how to do it type projects such as kayak fishing and fly fishing?

9.8 Cr Lindsay Lyons asked that further consideration be given to opportunities at the Ruahihi Canal and Lake McLaren in Tauranga as a means of increasing angler participation. Mark Sherburn advised that work had commenced in reviewing fish growth and survivability with the last year's liberation being doubled and a number of tagged fish released. Preliminary discussions about the Ruahihi Canal had centred on potential hazards with the steep embankments and that consideration was being given to what was viable. Andy Garrick added that consideration also needed to be given to the project from a business and return on investment point of view. All costs would need to be factored in including those associated with rearing and releasing fish, supplementary feeding and netting to contain fish if required, and management costs including CLE.

9.9 The following items were also briefly discussed;

- Licence agent education
- Tagged fish promotion
- Closure of two local fishing shops (licence agents)
- Fish & Game website
- Issues at Lake Waikaremoana
- Galatea/Murupara sewerage discharge
- BOPRC river and drainage works including removal of willows

9.10 Andy Garrick identified that the key priorities for the 2020-21 Operational Work Plan appeared to have remained largely unchanged, and advised that staff would give further consideration to today's discussions and review some of the areas and projects within those priorities for incorporation into next year's OWP.

10.0 SUB-COMMITTEE TO EXPLORE OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME

10.1 Council considered the option to form a sub-committee for exploring other sources of income and decided that it would be more appropriate at this point in time to form an informal ideas group so this would not be too onerous on those involved. Andy Garrick suggested that the initial meeting be scheduled when Steve Doughty next visited the region in April/May, as staff had found his visit last week productive. He was keen to assist us and had undertaken to make Eastern Region one of his pilot regions. It was agreed that the informal ideas group would be made up of Crs Ngahi Bidois, Lindsay Lyons, and Geoff Thomas in conjunction with several staff members, and the group would report back to the Council meeting following the occasion when they met.

11.0 ANGLERS NOTICE REVIEW

11.1 Matt Osborne provided an overview of the items identified to date to go into an 'Issues and Options' paper to be circulated to interested parties for comment. He said that some of the items were carried over from last year as a full Anglers Notice Review is only undertaken every two years. Matt informed Council that today's job was to approve those items Council wished to take forward for further consideration. Matt commented on the reclassification of several areas on lakes Rotorua, Tarawera, and Rotoiti from fly only to fly/spin methods during the 2018 Anglers Notice Review and the general acceptance of these changes from anglers fishing those areas. He noted Council had indicated it's goal was to continue to review regulations and simplify these where possible. The numbers of anglers spin fishing in these areas had not increased

- significantly. Cr Geoff Thomas suggested that the use of soft baits with spin gear was also offering additional opportunities for anglers.
- 11.2 Council supported carrying items 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 through to the next stage of consultation. Council discussed item 4.6 relating to Saturday opening of the Fishing Season and agreed that further discussion around this was warranted. Andy Garrick suggested that if the proposal for a change to opening of the fishing season throughout New Zealand was being sought this needed to the NZ Council for consideration, but we also had an obligation to communicate with neighbouring regions if it was proposed that this be implemented within our region only.
- 11.3 Cr Barry Roderick suggested there may be merit in opening the Ngongotaha earlier. i.e. in November to capitalise on the large brown trout present.

12.0 NZ COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

- 12.1 Andy noted that the organisation had been wanting a communications strategy and issue specific communication plans for some years. It was critical to have strategies and plans that reached our target audiences and we could all buy into, but it was critical too to ensure that the messages we put out didn't result in unintended or undesirable consequences as had resulted from too many of our national releases targeting the agricultural sector. It was disappointing the proposed NZ Council Communications Strategy hadn't been developed with one or two regional staff sitting around the table with the NZC office staff involved. We need to be credible and speak with one voice. The strategy/plan needs to be issues driven, and it needs to be a live document that is updated in response to what's happening in the political arena or elsewhere. The strategy needs to identify who we want to target, what the message is, and how it's going to be delivered and when for maximum effectiveness. The draft we've been asked to comment on requires a lot of work.
- 12.2 The strategy was discussed at some length and Council and staff agreed that while there was a need for the organisation to speak with one voice, the document was left wanting in a number of areas, particularly in relation to restrictions placed on regional communications. There was a need to draw on the operational and specialist experience of those in the wider organisation and this was not reflected in the document.
- 12.3 *Agreed (Ken Coombes/Ngahi Bidois) that Council agrees with the principle of having a Communications Strategy, but Council required more time to consider this draft before providing feedback to the NZC as some parts of it appeared to be wanting other parts too restrictive. [20/02/12.3]***
- 12.4 Cr Ngahi Bidois commented on the lack of local media produced by Eastern Fish & Game recently and asked whether it would be possible for staff to contribute a monthly article to the Ngongotaha Community Newsletter? Andy Garrick agreed that we had not been quite as prolific with our media releases some months recently, and this had been contributed to by the loss of the part time North Island Communications position which had been based in this office.

13.0 DUMPING OF GAME BIRD CARCASSES

- 13.1 The purpose of this item was to review Council policy on dealing with issues related to dumping of game bird carcasses. Andy confirmed that due to a technicality in the Litter Act, Fish & Game rangers were not Litter Control Officers and therefore Council might wish to reconsider its position about including a special condition in its second schedule relating to the wilful dumping of game birds or their carcasses. He said that it was too late to incorporate a change for the 2020 Game Bird Hunting regulations. Cr Murray

Ferris suggested this be revisited later this calendar year when the 2021 Game Bird gazette notice was being formulated.

14.0 KAITUNA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT RESERVE STAND NUMBER 5

14.1 Council discussed the future allocation arrangements for Hunting Stand No. 5 in the Lower Kaituna Wildlife Management Reserve. Andy Garrick provided some background to the nine year allocation of the stand in 2013 [13/10/9.5] to the late Ray Bushell in recognition of the significant contribution Ray had made to the day to day upkeep of the Kaituna Wildlife Management Reserve. Council supported the transfer of the stand for the three years remaining of the original nine year term to Ray's hunting partner, grandson Rangitaura. When this concludes in 2023 the future of the stand will be reviewed, and it will either be returned to the general ballot pool or set aside for junior or novice hunters.

14.2 *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Alan Baird) that Hunting Stand 5 in the Lower Kaituna Wildlife Management Reserve be reallocated to the grandson of the late Ray Bushell for three years following the 2020 Season after which it will be reviewed for return to the general ballot pool or to be set aside for junior/novice hunter use. [20/02/14.2].* Crs Barry Roderick and Lindsay Lyons did not vote due to their declared conflicts of interest.

15.0 SPECIES MONITORING REPORT

15.1 Council received the Rotorua Lakes 2019 Winter Creel Survey Report.

16.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

16.1 *Tongariro-Taupo Conservation Board*

No report.

16.2 *Bay of Plenty Conservation Board*

No report.

16.3 *Department of Conservation*

No report.

16.4 *The New Zealand Fish and Game Council*

Cr Lindsay Lyons advised that the NZC had not yet met this year so he had little to update Council on. Cr Barry Roderick noted that the items highlighted by the recent audits of regions as being deficient included annual evaluation of Managers' and Council's performance with the latter needing to be undertaken by an independent assessor. He supported the Otago Fish and Game Council's letter recommending that the New Zealand Council undertake one or two regional audits per year. Cr Lindsay Lyons suggested that full audits were not necessary, but it would be worth considering small ad hoc audits of areas such as governance and conflicts of interest, as these had been identified as underlying issues associated with each of the recent audits.

17.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

17.1 Andy Garrick provided a brief overview of the lapsed participant promotion staff had undertaken just prior to Christmas, and informed Council of follow up surveys to be undertaken with the assistance of Steve Doughty.

17.2 *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Alan Baird) that Council receives the Health and Safety Report, Management Report, and Licence Sales Report. [20/02/17.2]*

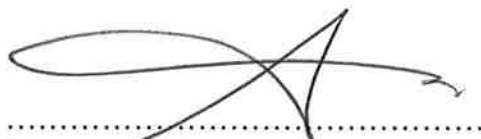
17.3 *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Alan Baird) that Council receives the Finance Report and approves payments for November and December 2019 totalling \$249,349.69. [20/02/17.3]*

18.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

- 18.1 Council briefly discussed a Council social gathering and it was agreed that Cr Geoff Thomas would circulate a suggested date for this.
- 18.2 Matt McDougall informed Council that the annual trend counts had indicated that black swan and paradise shelduck populations were stable and that regulations for these species for the 2020 Game Bird Hunting season would remain unchanged from the 2019 season. Matt informed Council that the Western Bay of Plenty Fish and Game Club had applied for a permit to disturb for the special swan shoot at Blue Gum Bay in the Tauranga Harbour at the end of this month, and advised that this would be issued unless Council had reason for not doing so.
- 18.3 Anthony van Dorp provided Council with an update on the Arms Legislation reforms and outlined recent Select Committee recommendations which had been circulated to him by Jack Kos.
- 18.4 Cr Ngahi Bidois wished to thank staff on behalf of the Awahou Fisheries Committee for arranging licences and prizes for kids fishing the recent Tangaroa competition. Ngahi also passed on an idea someone had suggested for the kids moving off the child free licence to be issued with a special "Tangaroa fishing licence" for this event.
- 18.5 Cr Murray Ferris thanked staff on behalf of the Council for their efforts over the Christmas break with the landslide event. Cr Lindsay Lyons offered Council's assistance for such events in the future if staff were short on manpower.

19.0 MEETING CLOSED

- 19.1 The meeting closed at 3.14pm with a closing karakia from Cr Ngahi Bidois.



Murray Ferris
Chairman

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

2.0 APOLOGIES

- 2.2 *Agreed (Alan Baird/Ngahi Bidois) that the apologies for the 180th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [20/02/2.2]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (5 DECEMBER 2019)

- 3.1 *Agreed (Ngahi Bidois/Alan Baird) that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2019 be confirmed as a true and correct record subject to the following adjustments:*
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8.0 APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS AND OTHER POSITIONS FOR 2020

- 8.2 *Moved (Murray Ferris/Lindsay Lyons) that Cr David Woolner be nominated for Council Chair. [20/02/8.2]*
- 8.5 *Moved (Murray Ferris/Ken Coombes) that Lindsay Lyons be nominated for NZ Council appointee. [20/02/8.5]*
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