

HAWKE'S BAY FISH & GAME COUNCIL

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT THE GAME FARM ON TUESDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2017 AT 6:00 PM

PRESENT

Councillors Hern, Mackie, Williams (Chairman), Duley, Bates, Lumsden and Niblett.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mark Venman (Regional Manager and minute taker), Nathan Burkepile and Christine Tuck (Hawke's Bay Fish & Game staff).

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Lance Greaves

INTRODUCTION

1.0 WELCOME

The first Council meeting of 2017 was opened by Chairman Cr Williams. Cr Williams welcomed Mark as the new Regional Manager and thanked Cr Duley for being the Chairman for the previous six years.

2.0 APOLOGIES

No apologies were received from Cr McIntosh.

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (29 November 2016)

Cr Lumsden identified that under "Duck Season" in Matters Arising, that the wording says "*bringing the start of the duck shooting season back by one week*" when he thought that it should have read forward instead. Staff agreed that it was intended to mean bring the start of the duck shooting season earlier i.e. end of April.

Cr Bates asked how staff had progressed with using the funds from Council's wildlife fund. Nathan responded by saying that the wetland is mainly going to be used for youth shooting and that the owner was going to manage it with assistance from Nathan. Nathan said that the owner has a number of youth hunters that want to be involved that they wanted to put through first. Cr Bates expressed concern that if \$5,000 from the fund was being used for this particular project then a formal agreement should be written up. Nathan agreed that a formal written agreement would be completed and said that he would organise it. Cr Lumsden asked whether the juniors that get to shoot there are balloted and asked whether all junior licence holders were able to apply to shoot at this wetland. Nathan replied that the owner has some juniors lined up to shoot there in the near future but added that he will talk with the owner to get a formal agreement written up to ensure that opportunities are made available to other youths. Cr Lumsden wanted as many youth shooters to experience this opportunity as possible. Cr Niblett said that it should be balloted. Christine explained that the money had been provided for the development of the wetland on the condition that the shooting could be balloted for two weekends during the season for youth hunters. Nathan agreed to send a copy of the formal agreement to all Councillors for approval. Lance added that they had a similar system operating at Peka Peka swamp.

AGREED

- 3.1** *That having been previously circulated to members, the minutes of the meeting of the Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council held on 29 November 2016 are a true and correct record. [17/2/3.1]*

Bates/Hern

4.0 MATTERS ARISING:

5.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

- Surplus trout from Turangi hatchery – Mark
- Wi-Fi for meeting room – Mark
- Advertising and promotion of activities for junior hunters and anglers – Cr Lumsden

6.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

No conflicts of interest were identified.

7.0 COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Mark explained what the current Council priorities were for the 2016-2017 year and asked whether the Council were comfortable continuing with the current priorities or wanted to refocus their priorities and look at other work. Cr Niblett suggested the option of organising a “priorities workshop” to discuss key Council priorities in depth within the next couple of weeks. Councillors Niblett and Duley added that it is difficult to allocate sufficient time to reviewing priorities at a Council meeting and with new staff on board it was time to review the priorities in more detail and provide some guidance as to where the Council want to go.

Cr Williams said that RMA issues must remain as a main priority as F&G are obliged to do that work. Cr Williams said that habitat was also important and that we needed to look at the regions fishery resource in more detail. Cr Duley asked whether Cr Williams was referring to both habitat and also trout populations and Mark replied by saying both were important. He added that we needed to better understand the region’s trout fisheries but also that it was important to work with other agencies to better understand the effects of beach raking, gravel extraction and other major river works and how these operations impact on the various trout fisheries. Cr Lumsden asked whether it would be valuable to go through each catchment and look at risks and current issues and improve on previous inventories. Nathan emphasised the importance of having baseline fishery data in processes such as TANK.

There was a discussion regarding whether we should be monitoring water quality but it was made clear that that was the role of the Regional Council and that the information was made available on their website.

Cr Lumsden asked how this current year was progressing in terms of what we had planned on doing given that we are approximately half way through the year and also asked if there were any challenges ahead. Mark replied by saying that there were a number of larger projects occurring in early 2017 such as duck banding, wetland development and headwater drift dives. Mark explained that there was no point in continuing with the creel survey planned at Lake Tutira due to the lack of anglers and current water quality issues there at present but suggested that some of that time could be allocated to better understanding how the trout are

faring at the moment and better understand what they are feeding upon and perhaps investigating their growth rates over more recent years. Cr Bates said that when the grass carp were added to the lake ten years ago other agencies offered to help F&G undertake monitoring work as we don't have a lot of staff resources. Cr Niblett asked Mark to investigate what was on file and documented regarding any assistance.

Mark spoke about compliance and the need to increase the number of contacts if we were going to meet our target this year. He added that new rangers were joining the team and that relationships were being formed with other compliance agencies in the region. Mark also emphasised the importance of publicising the results of our compliance efforts throughout the year to show licence holders that compliance is occurring and to act as a deterrent to others.

Mark also said that there was a need to increase general awareness of what Fish & Game does in the region as there are a lot of people that do not understand what the organisation does.

Cr Williams asked whether there was a need to hold a specific workshop to discuss priorities further. Councillors Duley and Niblett agreed that there was a need as it provided an opportunity to really drill down and discuss priorities in detail rather than just roll over what was agreed in last year's operational work plan. A date for the workshop was set for Thursday 23rd February at 6pm for Councillors and Mark to meet. Cr Bates emphasised that a lot of the work that we are currently doing is core work that needs to remain but that doesn't leave much time to do anything else.

AGREED

No recommendation made.

8.0 ANGLERS NOTICE REVIEW

Mark explained that the February Council meeting formed the start of the review process for the 2017-2018 Anglers Notice. Local angling clubs were notified in January seeking feedback on suggested changes. Only one submission had been received and that was from the Napier Anglers Club. This submission asked for treble hooks to be illegal in the Hawke's Bay region as of next season and advocated for the use of single pointed hooks.

Cr Williams said that in 2003, a significant review was completed regarding the use of treble hooks across the whole of NZ. Cr Hern said that the Minister at that time wanted the regulations to be consistent across the whole country and so the use of treble hooks was permitted across all Fish & Game regions but were not permitted to be used in the Taupo region (managed by DOC). Cr Hern added that it was to help travelling anglers that moved throughout New Zealand to be able to fish without worrying about regulation changes between regions. Cr Bates said that without a lower limit on many of the rivers, a young angler that catches a trout spinning with a treble hook is likely to keep that trout anyway. Cr Lumsden said that we have relatively low fish numbers in our rivers and that being able to release a trout that you don't want to keep should be a priority. Cr Williams asked whether there were any Fish & Game regions that specifically banned the use of treble hooks. It was identified that it was a First Schedule regulation. Cr Bates asked whether it was an issue and Cr Duley suggested leaving it as is. Cr Lumsden reminded everyone that it is a Schedule 1 regulation and that it would require changing the regulations across the entire country.

However, a letter could be written and the matter discussed at NZ Council to see whether other regions supported moving towards the use of single pointed hooks nationally.

Mark asked whether the Council had any recommended changes. Cr Bates explained that the Council has spent a lot of time simplifying the fishing regulations for Hawke's Bay and suggested removing some more regulations no longer required to simplify them further. Cr Duley raised a concern about poor fish handling techniques especially amongst fly fishermen and the number of dead fish he has observed in back country rivers this summer. Mark questioned whether this was more 'best practice' rather than a regulation but Cr Duley questioned how far best practice goes towards protecting the trout. Mark then questioned how such a regulation would be enforced.

A discussion followed regarding the education of anglers and how best to encourage anglers to minimise trout handling. Cr Duley explained that the culture has developed of anglers posing holding trout out of the water with images featuring on the covers of magazines and brochures and even on material distributed by Fish & Game. Cr Mackie said that it is also an issue when anglers watch television programmes and fish aren't handled correctly by the hosts. Cr Bates also shared concerns with anglers not handling trout correctly and keeping them out of the water for extended periods of time prior to releasing them. Cr Duley said that he would like to see a regulation created where you weren't allowed to take a fish out of the water that you weren't intending to kill. Cr Hern added that when anglers see a trout swim away that they assume that it has survived but that fish may die over the next 24-48 hours if it wasn't handled correctly. He also said that it was an educational issue and added that fishing guides also have a responsibility but said that it's not only an issue in backcountry areas but also with anglers fishing in our more accessible reaches lower down.

Cr Bates said that with slot limits to protect larger trout in backcountry areas, it is these larger fish that are suffering at the hands of some anglers as these bigger fish are the ones that anglers want to hold up out of the water to be photographed. Cr Niblett suggested having a limit of two fish per day that you are allowed to catch but this would be very difficult to enforce. Cr Duley said that if you made it a regulation that you couldn't take fish out of the water (that you intended to release) then it would stop a lot of the issues and it would self-police itself. If you couldn't photograph them out of the water then there would be no incentive to take the fish out of the water.

Cr Williams said that backcountry fisheries were going to be talked about at the next NZ Council meeting in March. Cr Hern reinforced that it isn't just an issue with backcountry fisheries and said that it's a wider issue affecting all of the anglers.

Nathan mentioned that there already appeared to be a shift coming out of America where anglers were being seen to be handling trout to a lesser extent and Fish & Game NZ should be leading by example in their publications and material online to promote best practice especially now that Fish & Game own the magazine.

Cr Lumsden said that it was concerning to see such poor handling of freshwater and sea fish on the television and in online videos. Cr Duley said that Fish & Game nationally sponsored a television show recently that showed some poor fish handling techniques and asked why Fish & Game were supporting that type of behaviour.

Mark mentioned that he has tried to push best practice through the last fishing newsletter and agreed that we could do more regionally through the website and on Facebook to get our messages out to a wider audience. A video is the easiest way to demonstrate proper techniques. Cr Duley offered to supply some recently obtained video footage for staff to use to create a short video for circulation on Facebook to help convey key messages. Cr Duley

asked for the editor of the Fish & Game magazine to stop publishing photographs of trout being held out of the water prior to being released. Cr Duley suggested contacting the editors of other fishing magazines in NZ to ask them to stop publishing pictures of people holding trout, in particular, out of the water.

Nathan suggested that the Council sends a letter to the editor of the Fish & Game magazine and to the communications team asking for this issue to be addressed. Cr Williams said that he would discuss it shortly with Don Rood.

Lance mentioned that there was nothing in the regulations about conflicts between anglers and duck shooters on the rivers. A discussion occurred around public land and the issues of other river users and members of the public all sharing the resource.

Cr Lumsden felt uneasy about previous changes to the winter limits on the Mohaka (downstream of Mangatainoka stream) and Ngaruroro (downstream of Kiwi Creek) rivers and the effect it might have for spawning fish when the upper reaches were extended. Cr Duley said that he didn't think that it was an issue on the Ngaruroro especially given the low number of anglers that fished that high up from April onwards.

AGREED

8.1 *That Council agrees to the consultation process and time frame for considering changes to the 2017-2018 Anglers Notice. [17/02/8.1]*

Lumsden/Niblett

8.2 *That Council identifies any issues for further discussion in the initial 'Issues and Options' paper to be prepared in April. [17/02/8.2]*

Lumsden/Niblett

9.0 GAME FARM REVIEW

Mark referred to this year's operational work plan and the need for staff to initiate the development of a long-term plan for the Game farm site. With the development of next year's operational work plan it is timely to look at what the Council would like to see done with the grounds and the neighbouring maize paddocks. Cr Bates provided some historical context on previous discussions and explained that once the new office complex was built here that the Council were keen to keep hold of the surrounding land that it owns and to investigate the option of creating a large wetland on the site to use for tourism and to showcase the work that Fish & Game does. He added that the site has a lot of potential and that there are very few other regions out there that with that much potential right on their doorstep. A staged approach over a 10-15 year period could be the way to go with the initial creation of a wetland that would be developed further with assistance from external funding and business partners.

Nathan said that we host a number of school groups at the Game Farm and it wouldn't be difficult to use the new wetland area as an educational tool and show Fish & Game in a positive light. Cr Bates said that it has huge potential but at the end of the day it has to pay for itself. Cr Duley liked the idea of getting of seeking external funding from businesses to promote education and awareness of Fish & Game. There was also the option to stock the wetland with trout to increase future fishing opportunities. Nathan raised concerns over bringing salmon to the area and this hurdle would need to be examined further. A discussion

followed regarding historical records of salmon being caught in both the Mohaka and Ngaruroro rivers with the Acclimatisation Society responsible for their release in this region.

Mark added that he would also investigate the option of leasing some of the spare land and would look at some longer term options for the future. Some of the lease money could be used towards the creation and development of the wetland.

10.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

10.1 EAST COAST/HAWKE'S BAY CONSERVATION BOARD

No report received.

10.2 REPORTS FROM OTHER AGENCIES

No reports received

10.3 REPORTS FROM NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL

No report. Next New Zealand Council meeting scheduled for March 2017.

11.1 MANAGEMENT REPORT

P.26 Cr Duley reported hearing eels deaths from the Esk River. Eels reportedly had a fungus around their mouths.

Mark updated the Council on a recent algal bloom that was present in Tutira.

P.27 Cr Duley asked how duck banding was progressing. Nathan said that we were still at 509 ducks banded but were undertaking another round of duck banding on Friday at Lake Hatuma. Next week duck banding will occur at Boundary Road and at OngaOnga. We are hoping to band 250 ducks at Hatuma and 100 at each of the remaining two sites to hopefully hit a total of 1,000 banded ducks. Cr Duley asked what the ratio of juveniles was looking like and Nathan responded that it was looking fairly good but said that he hasn't properly analysed the data. He added that Lake Rotokare produced good numbers of juveniles this year.

Cr Niblett asked how many ducks did we have to band for it to be significant and statistically relevant. Nathan responded that he thought that we should band 1,000 ducks to get a good confidence interval. Cr Niblett then asked if this was because birds travel throughout the country randomly. Nathan said that Matt McDougal from Eastern Fish & Game was still finalising the duck management unit and has asked Matt whether we need 1,000 ducks banded from the Hawke's Bay or 1,000 from the duck management unit. If it is the duck management unit then that includes Gisborne, Wairoa and even parts of Wellington. Nathan said that 1,000 banded ducks give us good confidence intervals which is what we need. Cr Niblett asked who was guiding the statistics behind it and Nathan replied that Matt was and that he had been working with Dr Barker from Otago on it. Cr Niblett said again that he believed that their statistics were based upon the theory that ducks move randomly throughout NZ. The sample size could be too small to be statistically valid. Nathan added that we are getting good information back from banding and it is showing for example, that Hawke's Bay is producing some ducks that are getting shot in the Wellington region. Nathan will follow up with Matt on the analysis of the banding data.

Cr Williams asked whether all Fish & Game regions are banding ducks. All regions in the North Island bar Northland are banding ducks. Nathan added that ideally, all regions should be banding ducks. Cr Duley asked whether all regions should be banding ducks as part of the mallard research project. Councillors Bates and Hern said that it has got to be value for money and we need to get good information back in return. Cr Bates said that the investment hasn't actually provided us with any more ducks. Nathan said that it provides us with the best value for money if you can band a decent sample size. Cr Mackie asked how much it cost to undertake banding.

A discussion developed on the cost of banding and the cost of releasing reared birds. Cr Niblett said that he had banded 7,000 hand reared birds this year. These are kept separate to the 1,000 ducks that Fish and Game are banding in the wild and analysed separately as returns. Survival and harvest rates can be then calculated separately for both hand reared and wild birds. Nathan added that Matt is using the data to estimate population size but this could be biased by the presence of captive reared birds in the counts. Nathan said that another issue is that reporting rates of captured bands is fairly low.

Mark asked Cr Niblett whether the same number of hand reared birds were released each year and at the same time. Cr Niblett responded by saying that the birds were always released at the same time of year but in terms of numbers it varies between years as to which regions that they have gone to and depends on demand. A short discussion developed on poor reporting rates of released birds. Cr Mackie suggested that a text service could be set up to assist with better reporting of banded ducks. He felt that this would be easier for hunters than going online or to a shop to fill out a form. Nathan added that the text would need to include specific information to be of value and suggested that it would be more useful if it covered the whole of the North Island rather than just the Hawke's Bay region. Nathan said that the band reporting needs to be really easy for hunters to find on the new Fish & Game website during the hunting season. Cr Mackie suggested adding an incentive for hunters to report back their bands. Cr Hern said that a financial incentive worked for the first year where band returns were up approximately three fold but reporting rates have dropped again over the last three years despite the incentive remaining the same.

Cr Lumsden questioned the way that the compliance checks were reported. Staff explained that although the fishing season opens on the 1st October, reporting for the new operational work plan year commences on 1st September and hence contacts for the 2016-2017 year started back on 1st September 2016.

Cr Williams asked whether an update on compliance would be circulated in the media and Mark replied that a release would be written after the completion of any Court case.

11.2 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Cr Duley made comment that it was encouraging to see that there had been no work place accidents over the past 2 years.

AGREED

11.2.1 That Council records that it has received this report.

Bates/Duley

11.3 FINANCE REPORT

Cr Hern said that it was interesting to see how under budget we were in terms of fishing licence sales. Cr Duley asked what the pattern of licence sales was like month by month. Mark explained that many of the rivers were unfishable at the start of the new fishing season in October and licence sales were slightly behind as a result. Cr Hern said that it was hard to get people interested in buying a licence to fish when there wasn't much water in the rivers at present. Cr Williams asked which river in particular and Cr Hern replied that there wasn't much water in any of the rivers. The tributaries in particular are very low. Cr Bates spoke about the restrictions on the local rivers in regards to irrigation.

Christine explained that the fish licence sales were down on last year but this had been compounded by the new licence category options where people were selecting the cheaper options when buying a licence. Cr Hern added that we were still behind in terms of revenue. Cr Williams said that NZ Council had spoken about licence categories but added that they wanted to leave them as they were for a few years to get some longer term data on how they are performing and what categories were preferred by anglers.

AGREED

11.3.1 That the payments of accounts via Westpac Business online by direct credit will be jointly processed by Christine Tuck (Office Administrator) and/or Carmel Veitch (Accountant) and/or Mark Venman (Regional Manager) will authorise these payments prior to processing. [17/02/11.3.1]

11.3.2 That Mark Venman (Regional Manager) be added as an "Administrator" on Business Online. [17/02/11.3.2]

11.3.3 That Mark Venman (Regional Manager) and Kevin Williams (Chairman) be added as signatories to the Hawkes Bay Fish & Game Council Bank Accounts. [17/02/11.3.3]

11.3.4 That Andy Garrick (Acting Regional Manager) and Greg Duley (Chairman) be removed as signatories to the Hawkes Bay Fish & Game Council Bank Accounts. [17/02/11.3.4]

11.3.5 That Andy Garrick (Acting Regional Manager) be removed as "Administrator" to the Hawkes Bay Fish & Game Council Bank Accounts. [17/02/11.3.5]

11.3.6 That the Council authorise Mark Venman (Regional Manager) holding a credit card for work related purchases with a spending limit of \$2,000.00. [17/02/11.3.6]

11.3.7 That the bank authorities and cheques are amended for Mark Venman (Regional Manager) to sign jointly with Christine Tuck (Administrator), Carmel Veitch (Eastern Fish & Game Accountant), Kevin Williams (Chairman) and/or John Lumsden (Councillor). [17/02/11.3.7]

Niblett/Mackie

Cr Mackie queried what the \$4,000 was in the bank transaction for a lawyer. Christine explained that the transaction was related to Plan Change 5 legal expenditure which was reimbursed by NZ Council. Cr Mackie also questioned whether brown trout had been liberated in Lake Tutira. Mark explained that the 500 browns were part of the delayed spring liberation that we had committed to. Cr Mackie said that going forward; we need to re-evaluate the stocking of Lake Tutira in its current state.

AGREED

That Council approves the following payments:

<i>November 2016</i>	<i>61,357.16</i>
<i>December 2016</i>	<i>56,934.68</i>
<i>Total to approve</i>	<i>118,291.84</i>

[17/02/11.3.8]

Mackie/Duley

17.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

Yearling trout

Mark mentioned the 1,000 yearling trout that had been offered by the Turangi hatchery that were surplus. Cr Bates asked whether we could hold the trout here at the Game Farm for topping up the kids pond and Mark agreed that the fish could be held here and grown on in the concrete ponds until they were of a suitable size for the larger pond. Cr Bates also asked whether some could be released into the Maraetotara Stream but Mark added that they were all rainbow trout. Cr Hern and Niblett asked about the cost to feed the trout and raise them to a suitable size over a year. Cr Bates asked whether Craggy Range winery would like to purchase some more for their display pond. Mark said that he would find out as he wasn't comfortable taking the fish if they couldn't be found a suitable home. Cr Bates asked whether some more trout could be liberated into Lake Hawkston as access to anglers is available over summer. Cr Lumsden asked whether we could hold the trout at the Game Farm for a few months and then liberate them into Lake Tutira once conditions had improved over winter. Agreed to accept the fish only if they can be put into an existing fishery where they can be utilised by anglers.

Wi-Fi for meeting room

Mark said that we have received a couple of enquiries about having Wi-Fi available in the meeting room as part of the rental of the meeting room. He said that they have received a quote for approximately \$350 for a new router that would meet the requirements. Mark said that this cost could be recovered by charging slightly more for those wanting Wi-Fi available during the hire of the meeting room. Cr Bates raised a concern that the general visitors would be able to access our Wi-Fi but staff explained that it would be password protected. Cr Duley was comfortable with the concept if the money for the new router could be recovered over time. Cr Lumsden said that having Wi-Fi might attract more rental of the room and Cr Mackie said that it was useful to have Wi-Fi this day in age.

Advertising of junior activities

Cr Lumsden wanted to make sure that we were communicating with our licence holders about future events for both junior hunts and fish out days. He asked whether that data was widely available on our website as he was concerned that perhaps only a few people were

aware of certain opportunities while the majority could be missing out. He stressed that the information needs to be available to everyone. Staff responded by saying that fish out days are normally added to the kids' corner section of the website and advertised on Facebook.

18.0 PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION

The meeting went into recession at 8.40 pm for a publicly excluded session that commenced at 8.45 pm and concluded at 9.10 pm.

There being no further business to attend to at the conclusion of the public excluded session, the meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

CONFIRMED

Date:

11 / 4 / 17.



CHAIRMAN

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (14 FEBRUARY 2017)

3.1 That having been previously circulated to members, the minutes of the meeting of the Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council held on 29 November 2016 are a true and correct record. [17/2/3.1]

Bates/Hern

8.0 ANGLERS NOTICE REVIEW

8.1 That Council agrees to the consultation process and time frame for considering changes to the 2017-2018 Anglers Notice. [17/02/8.1]

Lumsden/Niblett

8.2 That Council identifies any issues for further discussion in the initial 'Issues and Options' paper to be prepared in April. [17/02/8.2]

Lumsden/Niblett

11.2 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

11.2.1 That Council records that it has received this report.

Bates/Duley

11.3 FINANCE REPORT

11.3.1 That the payments of accounts via Westpac Business online by direct credit will be jointly processed by Christine Tuck (Office Administrator) and/or Carmel Veitch (Accountant) and/or Mark Venman (Regional Manager) will authorise these payments prior to processing. [17/02/11.3.1]

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Niblett/Mackie

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