

NORTHLAND FISH & GAME COUNCIL
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF A MEETING
HELD AT THE NORTHLAND FISH & GAME OFFICE
NELL PLACE, WHANGAREI

7.00PM WEDNESDAY 11th DECEMBER 2024

PRESENT:

Chairman: Phil Durham

Councillors: Cameron Shanks, Mark Bell, John McEntee, Kelvin Ellis, Russell Daniels, Lloyd Altham, Barrie Barnes, Sean Brickland, Darryl Reardon

Staff: Craig Deal (Manager), Rachael Quin (Administrator)

The Chairman welcomed the councillors. The Conflict-of-Interest register was circulated around the table for all councillors to sign and declare any conflicts.

APOLOGIES: Lewis Peart (leave of absence), Noel Birchall

The Chairman informed the council that a leave of absence has been granted to Cr. Peart.

It was moved: *The apologies are accepted.*

Cameron Shanks / John McEntee **CARRIED**

Adoption of the Performance Report 2023-24

It was resolved: *That the Council adopts the Audited Performance Report of the Northland Fish & Game council for the year ended 31 August 2024.*

Darryl Reardon / Mark Bell **CARRIED**

Previous Minutes

It was resolved: *That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 8th November 2024 are confirmed as true and correct.*

Russell Daniels / John McEntee **CARRIED**

Matters Arising

Field Days

The Manager confirmed a stand has been booked and he is communicating with the NZC Communications Advisor. Cr Barnes reported that NZFGC CE Corina Jordan would be willing to attend.

Managers' Report

1210 Resource Management Act

Manager reported that NFGC are still party to the appeal on the consent granted to the Meridian Solar are at Marsden Point. NFGC staff are supporting Forest and Bird in their appeal, attending an upcoming mediation process. There would be more to report in February. Cr Ellis queried the cost if unsuccessful.

1310 Access

The Manager explained that balloting for wetland stand sites for the 2025 season would be advertised and drawn closer to opening weekend to encourage more interest.

1531 Prosecutions

The manager advised that the offending individuals have all completed diversion conditions and the charges have been dismissed.

1600 Licensing

The manager reported that analysis of Take A Mate campaign has shown that 20% of those who utilise the "Take a Mate" promotion purchase a game licence in subsequent seasons which is a good rate of uptake. There are national discussions to expand the promotion to other regions.

It was moved: ***That the Managers Report be received.***

Kelvin Ellis / Mark Bell

CARRIED

Field Officers Reports

The chair queried options available to address the botulism issue at Kaitaia oxidation ponds. The manager reported that we are waiting on the new consent approval which will have a botulism management plan and conditions that can be imposed. In the meantime, the Kaitaia field officer can only advocate Ventia and FNDC to continue to minimise the impacts of botulism. The Kaitaia field officer will be tasked to inspect other urban oxidation ponds on the Far North for signs of botulism.

It was moved: ***That the Field Officers reports be received.***

John McEntee / Russell Daniels

CARRIED

2024 Hunter Survey Report

Cr Reardon suggested the special paradise shelduck season be extended by one week. The chairman proposed the shoveler bag limit remain at 3 as there is no evidence that harvest in Northland is affecting the total shoveler population regionally or nationally and there is no rationale to limit the hunter experience.

2025 Game Notice

A summary of analysis for the Northland region of the NZ Game Bird Harvest Survey for all game bird species taken in the 2024 open game season was written by Field Officer Graham Gallagher for the council's information. The councillors discussed the shoveler population and paradise shelduck increasing population. The following draft Game Gazette notice for the 2025 season was presented for the Council's approval:

NORTHLAND FISH AND GAME REGION¹

1 Game That May Be Hunted or Killed—Duration of the 2025/2026 Season

Species	Season Duration (dates inclusive)	Daily Bag Limit
Grey/mallard duck and any hybrid of that species	3 May to 29 June 2025	12
NZ shoveler duck	3 May to 29 June 2025	2
Paradise shelduck	3 May to 27 July 2025 14 Feb 2026 to 22 Feb 2026	20 20
Black swan	3 May to 27 July 2025 14 Feb 2026 to 22 Feb 2026	20 20
Pukeko	3 May to 24 Aug 2025 14 Feb 2026 to 22 Feb 2026	12 12
California quail	3 May to 24 Aug 2025	10
Brown quail	3 May to 24 Aug 2025	10
Cock pheasant	3 May to 24 Aug 2025	5

2 Shooting Hours

- (1) 6.30am to 6.30pm, except the hunting of:
- (a) Paradise shelduck, pukeko and black swan on 14 Feb 2026 to 22 Feb 2026 will be from 6.30am to 8.00pm.

3 Decoy Limit

No limit.

4 Special Conditions

- (1) No person shall wilfully leave on the hunting ground any game bird(s) shot or parts of any game bird(s) shot.
- (2) Camouflaged Rowboats: Persons may hunt or kill game from an unmoored camouflaged rowboat.
- (3) During the 14 Feb 2026 to 22 Feb 2026 special open season, no person shall hunt within 300 metres of any urban sewage oxidation ponds.
- (4) Any licensed game bird hunter who has a Department of Conservation permit to take or kill wildlife for the purpose of hawking may hunt with an Australasian Harrier (*Circus approximans*) to take game birds. This is subject to the season length and bag limit for each game bird species in clause 1 of this notice and any

¹ Reference to description: *New Zealand Gazette*, 24 May 1990, No. 83, page 1861.

other special conditions for the Northland Fish and Game region and also subject to any conditions imposed by the Director-General of Conservation under such a permit.

The Chairman

Northland Fish and Game Council

The council unanimously agreed the shoveler bag limit remain at 3 and not be reduced to 2. The council discussed the paradise shelduck bag limit and suggested a bag limit increase to 25 per day to encourage hunters and limit the ongoing issues with crop and pasture degradation that a growing population of paradise shelduck is causing. Cr Reardon proposed the limit increase for the special season and not the open season.

It was moved: *To raise the paradise shelduck bag limit from 20 to 25 effective from the 2025 game season and 2026 special season.*

Kelvin Ellis / Sean Brickland

CARRIED

Draft Standing Orders

The manager tabled the draft Standing Orders for Northland Fish & Game Council adapted from the NZC adopted template.

It was resolved: *That the Standing Orders be adopted.*

John McEntee / Barrie Barnes

CARRIED

Draft Governance Policy

The manager tabled the draft Governance Policy for Northland Fish & Game Council.

It was resolved: *That the Governance Policy be adopted.*

Mark Bell / Kelvin Ellis

CARRIED

Health and Safety Report

Northland Fish & Game is required to give a Health & Safety report at each council meeting detailing:

- The implementation and adherence to Health & Safety policy/manual
- Any new issues or hazards that have arisen and how these have been addressed
- Progress with any ongoing issues

- Outcomes of audits and reviews required in the Health & Safety manual
- Any near misses or injuries

It was moved: **That the Health and Safety Report be received.**

Russell Daniels / Lloyd Altham **CARRIED**

Executive Limitations Report

It was moved: **That the Executive Limitations Report be received.**

Darryl Reardon / Kelvin Ellis **CARRIED**

Financial Report

Financial report ending 30 November 2024.

It was moved: **That the Financial Report is adopted.**

Barrie Barnes / John McEntee **CARRIED**

General Business

High Pathogenic Avian Influenza

The manager table a memorandum regarding avian influenza, its potential effects and the status of policies and strategy to prepare for and manage the arrival of it in New Zealand, for council information.

Draft Budget/OWP for 2025-26

The manager presented information for advice regarding priorities for Northland Fish & Game in the 2025-26 budget and operational work plan. Priorities were discussed by council with an emphasis on increase public interface as separate from stakeholder engagement to foster allies and friends of the organisation. A future effort is envisioned for more national support of priorities. Cr Bell suggested to promote Northland Fish & Game work with a list of surveyed wetland birds and recent evidence of the positive impact our wetland management provides e.g. bittern. He proposed revenue is sought and engagement with public is increased.

Action: Manager to carry out a cost estimate survey and risk assessment for starting bird watching tourism activities at Underwood wetland and Jack Bisset wetland.

The council saw the upcoming Field Days as an opportunity to promote Fish and Game and enlist support from NZC. The chairman suggested the public could be consulted for the management plan by enabling submissions to be received at the event.

The council suggested a bigger presence in local media and to ensure an informative media release leading up to the game bird season.

The chairman requested the true cost of each wetland hunting stand to gauge the real cost to Fish and Game providing access to hunters.

Action: Manager to work out costs of stands and proposed permit fee to hunters for the February 2025 meeting.

Other

Cr Brickland suggested maimai's could be upgraded as dual purpose for hunters and birdwatchers.

Cr Altham suggested an existing organisation involved in bird surveying could be engaged to reduced cost and risk.

It was moved: *That the staff of Northland Fish & Game be acknowledged and thanked for their hard work during the year.*

Kelvin Ellis / Darryl Reardon _____ *CARRIED*

Cr Reardon congratulated Cr Barnes on his appointment to NZC.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.32pm.

Phil Durham
Chairman

