



## AGENDA

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

19<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022

## AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

**A Meeting of Council will be held at the Hamilton Deer Stalkers Hall,  
Wairere Dr, Hamilton, on Saturday 19 March 2022 commencing at 11 a.m.**

### AGENDA

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\* Denotes attachments

**N Juby**  
**Chairman**

07/03/22

# AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



Minutes of a Meeting of Council  
held at the Huntly Fish, Game and Target Club  
on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2022 commencing at 10:15am.

## PRESENT:

**Chairman:** N. Juby  
**Councillors:** E. Williamson, D. Cocks, P. Shaw, C. Sherrard, G. Annan, G. Ralph, B. Barnes, D. du Preez (by Zoom).  
**Staff:** B. Wilson, D. Klee, A. Daniel.  
**Visitors:** D. Taylor (CE of NZFGC), M. Martindale, P. Hardy (DOC).

## 1. APOLOGIES:

G. Dickey, M. Barker, T. Clark, J. Dyer, C. Robertson, R. Grubb.

It was moved;  
that apologies be accepted.

Cocks/Annan – CARRIED

The Chairman thanked the Huntly Fish, Game & Target Club for allowing the use of their club rooms. The Chairman then welcomed Di Taylor NZFC Chief Executive and thanked her for attending the meeting.

The Chairman congratulated Clare Robertson for completing her Master's degree, and Mischa Davis for the recent birth of a daughter.

## 2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None declared.

## 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF 13<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER AND 16<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2021:

It was agreed that “black beaked gulls” in the November minutes, should be “black backed gulls”.

It was moved;  
that the minutes of the previous meetings of 13<sup>th</sup> November and 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021 as amended be accepted as true and correct records.

Annan/Cocks – CARRIED

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

The Chairman reported that he had called the Chairman of the Northland Fish & Game Council, Phil Durham, to discuss the Regional Structure Review. Mr Durham was adamant that Northland was not interested in any merger.

The Chairman had also met with Councillor Debbie Oakley and staff from the Eastern Fish & Game Council. This was an excellent meeting, and although Eastern was not interested in merging with Auckland/Waikato it was agreed that both councils would continue to work together constructively. The Chairman noted that he will try and attend the next Eastern meeting.

**5. COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:**

A letter was tabled from the Minister of Conservation, Kiri Allan, approving the Auckland/Waikato Sports Fish and Game Management Plan.

Mr Wilson advised that Auckland/Waikato was the first regional F&G Council to have a plan approved since the Otago plan in 2015.

**6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:**

Mr Wilson gave a brief update on Healthy Rivers advising that the process had been overtaken by national legislation. The various parties to the appeals were trying to arrive at a consensus as to a way forward. The starting point for resolving the points of appeal requires identification of the relevant national regulations. It is then a question for mediation of whether there is sufficient justification within the bounds of PC1 to adopt a more stringent standard or whether the PC1 rule should be removed to allow the national regulation to prevail.

The Chairman congratulated David Klee on his recent publicity efforts regarding Lake Ngaroto. Mr Klee replied that he was receiving much positive feedback from other agencies. Dr Daniel observed that the lake managers are looking at treating the symptoms of lake eutrophication and not the causes. Councillor de Preez passed on feedback that he had received from one of the district councillors who had attended the meeting at Ngaroto who believed that it had been effective.

Councillor Williamson emphasised that Council needs to put more effort into publicising the state of Lake Waikare. Mr Klee agreed to work on a publicity initiative for Lake Waikare.

The Chairman thanked Dr Daniel for his successful efforts in obtaining donations via CAF America.

The efforts of Councillor Geoff Dickey for co-ordinating predator trapping on Council's wetlands with Predator Free Franklin were acknowledged by the Chairman.

Councillor de Preez left the meeting.

It was moved;

**That the Chief Executive's bimonthly report be accepted.**

**Sherrard/Shaw – CARRIED**

The CE of the NZ Fish & Game Council, Di Taylor, then addressed the meeting. She thanked Council for the invitation, and then updated councillors on recent issues including governance training, risk assessment, and health & safety compliance. She informed that the NZ Council were actively looking for her replacement. Work has also been contracted out on promoting the Fish & Game brand among the general population, and a subcommittee had been set up to look at staff remuneration.

In reply to a question, she expressed her optimism that there would be considerable interest from suitable candidates for the appointed governance roles on regional councils. The challenge would be matching skills with those held by current councillors.

**7. NZ COUNCIL MEETING OF 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021:**

The Chairman expressed his appreciation for the summary provided by Councillor Barnes.

**8. LAND AND WATER HABITAT TRUST:**

It was moved;

**that the Annual Report for Land and Water Habitat Trust for the year ending August 2021 be tabled.**

**Cocks/Williamson – CARRIED**

Mr Wilson was asked how Council's reserves were invested. He replied that they were invested in term deposits that were usually 9 – 12 months duration. Councillors agreed that returns from term deposits had been low compared to other investment opportunities in recent years.

It was moved;

**that Mr Wilson prepare a report for the next Council meeting on alternative investment options.**

**Williamson/Ralph – CARRIED**

**9. SPORTS FISH REGULATIONS:**

Dr Daniel's report on proposed changes to the sports fish regulations was tabled. Discussion ensued over the treble hooks issue. Councillor Barnes considered that there were social licence aspects especially regarding animal welfare. Dr Daniel emphasized that research had shown that there was no difference in the mortality rate between treble and single hooks. He was concerned that a ban on treble hooks would be a barrier to entry due to the extra cost involved.

The Chairman suggested that the recommendation on the use of two assembled fly rods could refer to the “possession” of two assembled fly rods rather than “use of”. Dr Daniel agreed. However, after discussion it was agreed that the rules regarding multiple fly rods didn’t require change, but the issue was how the existing regulations were interpreted, so requiring a policy change rather than a change in regulations.

The Chairman informed the meeting that individual Tasmanian anglers could purchase two licenses, which allowed for the use of two rods at any one time.

It was moved;

*that the recommendation in the Sports Fishing Remits staff report be accepted.*

Annan/Cocks – CARRIED

#### **10. OHINEMURI RIVER REPORT:**

Dr Daniel’s report was discussed. Mr Wilson noted that Council had put considerable efforts in promoting the Ohinemuri fishing in 1992 because it was fishing exceptionally well that year. However, 1992 was the coldest year in the last 70, and probably 2°C colder than current temperatures, which was a considerable difference for a trout fishery. In reply to a question Dr Daniel agreed that trout fisheries in many of our northern rivers would be equally affected by warmer temperatures.

It was moved;

*that the Ohinemuri River Report be tabled.*

Cocks/Annan – CARRIED

#### **11. ACCESS TO TROUT RIVERS:**

It was agreed to leave this agenda item to the next meeting.

#### **12. OSH UPDATE:**

It was moved;

*that the February 2022 OSH report be tabled.*

Ralph/Annan – CARRIED

#### **13. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

Councillors considered the request from the NZ Council for nominations for representatives on the Research Strategy Sub-Committee of NZ Council. Councillors agreed that Mr Klee would be excellent in this role due to his extensive experience in co-ordinating Fish & Game research projects.

It was moved;

*that Council nominates David Klee as representative on the Research Strategy Sub-Committee of NZ Council.*

Ralph/Shaw – CARRIED

Councillor Cocks asked whether the sex-based regulations for mallards would be introduced for 2023, and what publicity would this initiative be given. Mr Wilson replied that the 3-yearly review of the game regulations would be coming out later in the year including consultation with licence holders. Mr Klee advised that there would be publicity on why there should be sex-based limits in the pre-season magazine.

Councillors discussed the draft report on the future regional structure of Fish and Game Councils. Concerns were expressed over conflicts of interest by the report authors and how these had been managed. The Chairman offered to write to the implementation group asking for details as to how COI was handled by the regional structure panel.

It was moved;

**that Mr Wilson be requested to prepare a report on the recommended options and schedule a Zoom meeting before the closure date for submissions (16th March).**

**Williamson/Cocks – CARRIED**

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 12:17pm.

## Bi-Monthly Chief Executive's Report

**March 2022**

### OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT

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#### **Project 1112: Banding/Shoveler Counts**

As mentioned in my last report, the number of ducks banded was pleasing this year, exceeding the 3000 bird target. Aka Aka and the Helensville sites in particular produced above average results. The cyclone that hit during the Te Awamutu banding weekend coupled with the botulism outbreak on the adjacent lake Ngaroto is likely to have had an influence on catch rates there.

Banding Location	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Hauraki Plains	1153	1171	1422	1818	1449	1224	881	1068	947
Te Awamutu	502	417	557	786	806	478	646	280	487
Opuatia	284	355	322	399	517	148	247	104	164
Aka Aka	181	274	264	507	399	0	48	212	914
Helensville	254	526	570	708	487	472	519	430	858
Wellsford	179	224	97	165	35	50	151	125	104
TOTAL	2553	2967	3232	4383	3693	2372	2492	2219	3474

This banding season has been complicated by supply issues around the Swedish-made duck bands. DoC received only half of what they normally would annually. Much larger than expected catches at Parakai and Aka Aka banding sites meant that our supplies were getting rather low and an immediate hunt for extras was launched. As soon as one site was finished, the remaining bands were sent to the next site and some were even couriered to Wellington F&G to help them finish their sites on time. We squeaked through but this is something to watch for next year.

DoC Banding Office suggested that we may be able to use band sizes just above or below our usual #27 fitted to mallards. Mr Dyer was able to recatch a number of mature mallards that had been raised and turned loose in his back yard, fit the over/undersized bands and photograph the results. Unfortunately, the large bands dropped down over the bird's ankle, which could obviously become a welfare issue post release. The smaller ones were too tight and, if fitted to a young bird that then grew out of it, this could result in painful results. So these 2 options were quickly ruled out.

Turkeys have been an ongoing issue at Wellsford banding site. Removing large numbers helped in the past but didn't eliminate them. Survivors still came back to the banding site and harassed some ducks away. This year, a novel approach has been to feed the turkeys by their roost sites at the opposite end of the farm so that, in the days immediately before banding, they had no need to go down the valley to the duck pond for a feed. No turkeys were caught on the banding site this year so this would seem to be an option for the future.

**Banding database:** After a meeting with DoC, David, and Roslyn discovered that the recoveries of captive banded birds from our region were not always being reported to us. Consequently, Roslyn has been updating our database with over 400 new entries. Recovery reports will be sent to the hunters where possible. We are hoping that this will encourage

hunters to keep on reporting and to show that we have solved the problem of their missing entries.

An email was sent out to all banding regions asking that each region change their permission in Falcon (national banding database) so that each region can view the other's data. This will be helpful if we have a band that is not from our region and we can then forward the information to the correct person.

### **Project 1116: Trend Counts**

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This year the number of black swan on the Kaipara Harbour is well down, but those on Lake Omapere, (about 90km away near Kaikohe), are massively up, to around 14,000. Northland F&G certainly consider this is linked. Botulism has just been reported for this lake, though fortunately the swan numbers have abated somewhat since the earlier count.

### **Project 1121: Harvest Assessment: Fish**

Due to the cancellation of the Te Awamutu Fish & Game Assn competition, staff will be running a prize draw for tagged trout weighed in on the traditional competition weekend. The annual competition has provided a very valuable dataset of length and weight data that has been linked to long-term trends in water quality in the lake. Adam Daniel will be assisted by Councillor Grant Annan in collecting data on the weekend. To encourage anglers to participate prizes were donated by Fish City, Hamills, and Wright Fishing and Outdoors.

### **Project 1181: Control**

**Botulism Outbreaks:** Botulism outbreak are starting to abate, although Lake Ngaroto has just had another low DO event leading to a fish kill which could exacerbate the issue there. Contractors are still working at the lake removing carcasses. The systems David has implemented over the past 10 years with botulism management plans becoming standard conditions on WWTP consents and on boarding specialised contractors to solely manage avifauna on these systems is paying dividends with mortality rates reduced by an order of magnitude in most cases. The one exception in the Waikato Region has been Te Kuiti WWTP. This plant has an active botulism condition on their consent, but the plant had high aggregations of birds despite thresholds being in place requiring dispersals. David contacted the operators in early January, but no one got back to him. After further correspondence he finally received a reply that birds were dying on the pond. The new staff appeared unaware of the requirements of the consent and botulism response plan. We immediately responded offering help and advice and wanted to set up a meeting ASAP. Despite multiple emails and voicemails no one has responded. Given this situation we are now forced to take this up with the compliance team at WRC to ensure they enforce the requirements of the consent.

Botulism has also been an issue in the north of our region this year, beginning mid-December at Mangere Watercare where a Bird Care Aotearoa worker, contracted to Watercare, has been collecting birds every few days and transferring live ones to Green Bay. This is her 8th year doing so here and more recently also at Helensville Watercare. Mr Dyer has played a role in supervising the banding of the recuperated birds to determine their survivorship rate, something the DoC Banding Office has asked for before their release. The object here is to supervise and train another bander, a member of the Bird

Care board, to also reach the Level-3 status which then allows him to work alone. He is also one of our most helpful banders at F&G sites.

Omaha Watercare this year had botulism; the first time seen there by any of the long-term workers. Although there was no botulism at Snell's Beach Watercare when Mr Dyer called, it has since been reported. Mr Dyer is in contact with the plant managers at these and other sites, (such as Mangere, Wellsford, Helensville and Wairewa). In the past botulism has often been ignored, but it is clear that a good deal more effort is now being put into removing infected birds to protect other birds on site, not just mallards but also scaup and brown teal.

A meeting was recently set up by Mr Dyer at Bird Care Aotearoa's Green Bay, Auckland, board room to explore options for hazing birds away from at risk sites such as wastewater treatment ponds before they become sick. Attendees included Birds NZ, (formerly the Ornithological Society), Watercare Enviro Team, DoC, Bird Care and Auckland Council. The usual options for scaring birds off smaller sites such as Helensville Watercare were considered, such as Zon-guns, Bird-Frite and so on. The proximity of Parakai may be an issue. Mangere is a huge site by comparison and there are numerous neighbours who will be noise averse. For instance, a top wedding venue and racehorse stud. It might be that improved management of the stored water could provide some respite. Also being considered is a drone-boat. Watercare are naturally reluctant to put humans in boats in biohazard contaminated water, in case they fall in. But a small drone that can be operated by a remote-control handset is another matter. These are already used overseas in the UK for water sampling by ground-based crews. By adding mylar-balloons, flashing lights, (at night), and similar, the appearance of the drone-boat could be changed to stop birds habituating to it. Other methods may prove to also be useful. The important thing is that Watercare were very interested in exploring these options to reduce the numbers of birds at risk.

**Northern Special Paradise Shelduck Season:** The season north of the Auckland Harbour Bridge seems to have gone very well this year. An unusually large number of hunters contacted Mr Dyer about where they could go. This coincided with a farm with a large irrigation pond having a change of manager, who'd asked Mr Dyer only a short time before for hunters to help with her parry problem. Those hunters subsequently all did very well. The 2-day season also means that, local hunters tend to know about more ponds than they are able to visit, given that they are probably already limited out for the weekend. So, a site that was begging for hunters went to some keen young lads whose shooting was a bit rusty, but they said they enjoyed themselves. So too did the pond's eel that took one of their birds, (lucky duck number 13!).

## **OUTPUT 2: HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT**

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### **Project 1211 RMA**

**Healthy Rivers (Plan Change 1):** WRC has confirmed that it intends to complete the appeals process and make Plan Change 1 (PC1) operative as soon as possible. The starting point for resolving the points of appeal for PC1 requires identification of the relevant national regulations and whether there is sufficient justification within the bounds of PC1 to adopt a more stringent standard or whether the PC1 rule should be removed to allow the national regulation to prevail.

There are 1050 appeal points, which have been divided into 17 groups.

We have stated that we're willing to discuss the use of alternatives to Overseer in PC1, however acknowledged that it will be difficult to analysis other approaches against submissions and appeals. I have asked the national RMA Advisor, Rebecca Read, to review the "Nitrogen Risk Scorecard" produced by Dairy NZ as a possible alternative to using Overseer.

A pre-hearing conference will be held soon to determine jurisdictional issues and the pathway for proceeding with the appeals

**Te Kuiti Sale Yards:** Te Kuiti Sale Yards have just submitted their consent application for the renewal of their current 20-year consent. Clare and Adam were concerned that the application's Assessment of Environmental Effects lacked sufficient information to establish the impact of their discharge.

Adam carried out a site visit, Friday 4th February 2022. During the visit, the valve for the discharge to the Mangokewa River was open and the main drain was full of washed down stock manure. A rain event would have resulted in a significant discharge of untreated manure to the river. The current procedures and consent conditions does not adequately prevent a significant discharge above contaminant standards from occurring; therefore performance standards and treatment should be added to the consent conditions.

Clare sent through a set of draft conditions which we would like included that will require upgrades and/or treatment options for washdown, effluent, and stormwater to ensure the discharge to the Mangaokewa River is to appropriate nutrient and contaminant standards. In addition to this we have requested monitoring and performance standard conditions.

The sale yards consultant amended the application stating the applicant will engage a suitably qualified expert to conduct a wetland and/or treatment system feasibility study and implement the outcomes, and the Sale Yards have agreed for this to occur.

**Waihi WWTP Consent Renewal:** Hauraki District Council (HDC) have put through their WWTP consent renewal application which Clare, Adam and David have been assessing. HDC are seeking a short-term (7 year) consent and are in the process of completing upgrades intended to make them compliant. Similarly, to the Paeroa WWTP consent, they have requested a short-term consent to give them time for the District Strategic Plan to be developed, leaving us concerned about the uncertainty. Clare will submit that we require

more certainty and to ensure that a botulism management plan is included, while working on lowered discharge limit.

### **Project 1221: Council Land**

**Stone Jug Road:** Fencing has been completed and Adam has reinstated the stock water. A local farmer has been asked to graze the property to keep the grass and weeds in check.

**Central Shepherd Wetland:** Cr. David Cocks has recently been cutting gorse here with his tractor & mower and so this was also the perfect opportunity to get in and deal to the stuff on the boundary fence. From memory 400-litres went on in all. There are strategically sited 1,000-litre water tanks set up to catch rainwater in these blocks. This means that the 200+litres that Mr Dyer carries on his truck can easily be topped up again onsite. Unfortunately, someone left a waratah sticking out of the ground by 100mm by one of these tanks. Why? Nobody knows. In the long grass this was a perfectly hidden tyre trap. Changing a tyre while lying on gorse to set up the jack up under the rear axle is a good time to practise not resorting to bad language!

**Cocks Wetland:** Cyclone Dovi with its heavy winds also left trees and branches across the access road at the Cocks Wetland. Mr Dyer turned up on the Monday with a chainsaw to remove this.

**North Shepherd Wetland:** The gate for this wetland has been destroyed by someone as an act of vandalism. The chain and padlock have been recovered for safekeeping preparatory to fixing this. Cyclone Dovi dropped a number of pines trees over our boundary fence. One fell over Island Block Road but was cut back by someone to allow vehicle-passage. One of our pondholders has since cleaned the main truck up with his chainsaw. There has also been a significant fire in this area, 5 hectares of “native bush”. Also, a homicide of a coarse fisherman down by the bridge. The boat ramp and water recorder device were both screened off by police when Mr Dyer was spraying in this immediate area shortly afterwards.

### **Project 1231: Other Land:**

**Wetland Consent Application:** David and Britta Deichmann have completed the first round of ground truthing and aerial surveys to inform the habitat assessment work being carried out for our comprehensive consent application. David has also been assisting other regions with wetland consenting issues given that he is one of the first to have acquired a consent after the new NES provisions came into effect.

**WCEET funded wetland projects (Project Manager: David Klee):** Contractors have completed another project on private land which will create 9ha of wetland and riparian nesting habitat. Two aerial applications of herbicide were conducted to control glyceria prior to the earthworks to try and prevent recolonisation post work. A dual water controls structure has been put in place that allows both manipulation of levels and complete dewatering if required. We are also working with Hall Engineering and WRC fisheries biologists to trial a removable koi cage that will allow us to catch pest fish and remove them from the system when the water is let go. If this is successful, we plan to implement more of these and retrofit some existing wetlands.

## **OUTPUT 3: PARTICIPATION**

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### **Project 1311: Access negotiation**

Adam met with two landowners below Toa Bridge and has secured a tentative access deal including signage on the downstream end to the two properties. Contractors have also fenced off the Stone jug property and installed angler crossings. Adam met with a trustee of the Whangapeki Trust (upper Whanganui River) to discuss the potential of assisting the trust in any fencing or riparian projects they may wish to undertake.

### **Project 1331: F&G Newspapers**

David is contributing to a feature article on wetland loss in the national magazine.

### **Project 1341: Other publications**

Adam continues to produce the reel life blog.

## **OUTPUT 5: LAW ENFORCEMENT**

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### **Project 1511 Ranging**

Adam has been ranging when drift diving and when working on the Stone Jug Property with 5 contacts resulting in 2 failures to produce citations.

## **OUTPUT 9: ADMINISTRATION**

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### **Project 1900: Admin/Overheads**

A request form has been created by Roslyn on the website for anyone with a licence can ask for their contact information to be updated on the Eyede database.

**B. Wilson,  
Chief Executive**