

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held at the
NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton,
on Saturday 7 April 2018 commencing at 11a.m.

AGENDA

	<u>Page</u>
1. Apologies	
2. Possible conflicts of interest arising from meeting agenda	
3. Minutes of previous meetings held on 10 th February 2018 *	1
4. Matters arising from previous minutes	
5. Council correspondence *	5
6. Chief Executive's bi-monthly report & financial statements	
6.1 Bi-monthly Chief Executives Report *	8
6.2 Financial Statements *	17
7. Appointment of F&G nominee to Te Kōpuka*	46
8. Development of the 2018/19 Budget and Operational Work Plan *	52
9. OSH Report *	86
10. NZF&GC meeting 16 – 18 March 2018	
11. General Business	
* Denotes attachments	

M. Young
Chairman

22/03/2018

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton,
on Saturday 10 February 2018 commencing at 11am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: M. Young

Councillors: G. Annan, C. Carey, D. Cocks, W. Howard, N. Juby, A. Kerr, P. Shaw,
C. Sherrard, B. Smith, S. Smith, E. Williamson.

Staff: J. Dyer, A. Daniel, D. Klee, B. Wilson.

Visitors: R. Tyson

1. APOLOGIES

M. Davis, A. Sintenie.

It was moved;

that the apologies be accepted.

Annan/Kerr CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 9 DECEMBER 2017:

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of 9th December 2017 be accepted as a true and correct record.

Annan/S. Smith CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

None.

5 CORRESPONDENCE:

A letter was received from Richard Tyson, Vice President EPCM, asking on behalf of EPCM that Council award a Certificate of Merit to life member Mr Lance Dickey in recognition of his forty years of outstanding service to Fish & Game.

It was moved;

that a Merit Certificate be awarded to Lance Dickey for his outstanding service to Fish & Game

S. Smith/Howard CARRIED

A memorandum was received from the NZ Fish & Game Council inviting consultation and feedback on establishing the Terms of Reference for a Fish & Game NZ National Salmon Committee.

Dr Daniel and Councillor Juby spoke regarding their concerns about the establishment of a national salmon committee, but both acknowledged that salmon were of considerable importance to South Island Fish & Game Councils.

It was moved;

that Council support the establishment of a F&G NZ National Salmon Committee.

Annan/Juby CARRIED

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

The Chairman informed that the Makarau boat ramp was under the management of local iwi. This is a popular boat ramp for Kaipara hunters.

Councillor Kerr inquired whether alternative banding sites had been found to replace the sites no longer available. Mr Dyer replied that it was looking encouraging that another site would be available near Wellsford. At the Aka Aka site the landowner was no longer willing to host the banding programme and thus other sites were being considered.

Mr Tyson spoke on his attendance the previous Saturday at the Wellsford banding day and emphasised that he was most impressed with the high volunteer turnout and especially the enthusiasm of the younger helpers. It was a great day, and Mr Tyson thanked Mr Dyer for his organisational efforts.

Councillor Howard noted that it was the Franklin Club and not EPCM that was carrying out the bait station operation on the lower Waikato River.

Councillor Cocks requested an update of the Meremere cleanfill site application by Ward Demolitions. Mr Wilson replied that he and Anna Sintenie had recently met with the applicant and expressed their concerns over the impact of water flows from the proposed site to the North Shepherd Wetland. An EIA had not yet been received.

General discussion ensued on waste water treatment plants in the Waikato District. Mr Klee reported that two options for the Te Kauwhata site were being considered:

- A new MBR plant and continued discharge into lake Waikare
- Pumping the effluent to an upgraded plant in Huntly.

In reply to a question regarding the Lake Waikare Section 128 Review, Mr Klee stated that a meeting of all parties would be held in June to look at both the in-lake options and changing the operational regime for the lake, including discharge via the Te Onetea outlet back into the Waikato River. Early indications are that these changes could reduce sediment discharge to the Whangamarino well in exceedance of the relatively small amounts imposed by the commissioners.

Dr Daniel stated that he had recently issued an offence notice for an angler fishing without a licence at Lake Hakanoa. Discussion ensued on the use of multiple rods in coarse fishing waters.

It was moved;

that Dr Daniel prepare a paper for Council on the use of multiple rods in coarse fishing waters.

Cocks/Sherrard CARRIED

In reply to a question, Mr Wilson stated that the zon guns were being rented out for \$2 per day +GST plus courier fees. This did not include the cost of fuel.

It was moved;

that the CE Bimonthly report and Financial Statements be accepted.

Cocks/S. Smith CARRIED

7. RELEASE OF CAPTIVE REARED MALLARDS:

Extensive discussion took place on the memorandum: Release of Captive Reared Mallards, prepared by Robert Sowman and Andy Garrick. The submission by Jeff Niblett was also considered.

There was general agreement that Council opposed the commercialisation of mallard hunting and that there should be no changes to standard regulations.

It was moved;

that Council's position on the five questions asked by the NZ Council was as follows:

- (i) *Is F&G supportive of releasing CRMs as a tool to augment wild populations?*
Opposed
- (ii) *Is F&G supportive of releasing CRMs as a tool that could be used to hasten the recovery of wild populations that are at low levels as a consequence for example, of a series of very poor breeding seasons or serious botulism outbreaks arising from climatic conditions, or over harvesting?*
Opposed
- (iii) *Does F&G support the concept of 'put and take' operations where CRMs are released for principal purpose of providing an immediate hunting opportunity?*
Opposed
- (iv) *If the latter is something F&G wishes to facilitate, support or promote, would we accept the development of commercial enterprises run along the lines of many*

upland game operations, or would we require 'put and take' operations to be of a non-commercial nature only? [An argument to consider is if F&G allows commercial pheasant/quail/partridge hunting, should it not also allow commercial exploitation of mallards or other gamebirds and change the law to enable this if necessary?]

Opposed

- (v) *If F&G allows release of 'put and take' operations, would we wish to see the birds hunted in a similar way to how wild mallards are hunted now, or would we be accepting of the upland game equivalent of 'driven hunts', where birds are encouraged to fly over hunters from point A to point B, or some other approach?*

Opposed

Williamson/Cocks CARRIED

Council rose for lunch at 12.20pm and resumed at 1.05pm.

8. LAND AND WATER HABITAT TRUST:

The Chairman asked if there were any questions on the Financial Statements for the Land and Water Habitat Trust, but there were none.

8. OSH UPDATE:

In reply to a question Dr Daniel stated that two stab vests had been purchased. General discussion ensued on the advantages or otherwise of high visibility vests for ranging.

9. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Councillor Howard asked about publicity for the 2018 F&G election especially the need for licence holders to opt in for voting and whether licence sellers would be contacted. Mr Wilson replied that he understood that there would be publicity in the National F&G magazine and that there would also be publicity in the Auckland/Waikato newsletter. Licence sellers would also be contacted and reminded that it was election year and the need to register licence holders for the election.

Councillor Sherrard informed that the NZ Council was looking at the online licence purchasing process for licence purchasers to opt in/out of being an elector.

It was moved;

that the NZ Council is asked to confirm that licence purchases will need to opt in/out of being an elector

Cocks/S. Smith CARRIED

Councillor Juby advised that boxes for DoC traps are available from the Waikeria Prison for free. Contact details available from David Klee.

Councillor Annan informed Councillors that Russell Gaston was very humbled to receive his Merit Certificate from Council. Mr Gaston died just after Christmas, and Councillor

Annan complemented Mr Wilson on his eulogy given at the memorial service on Mr Gaston's contribution to F&G. The service was well attended with over 200 people in the small community hall.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 1.20pm.



21 February 2018

Ben Wilson
Office Manager
Auckland-Waikato Fish and Game Council
RD9, Hamilton

Dear Ben

Re: World Wetland Day Event Waipa Lakes Predator Control

The National Wetland Trust wishes to express its sincere thank you for your support for a recent World Wetland Day event in the Waikato Region.

On World Wetlands Day (2nd Feb), in partnership with Fish and Game, the NZ Landcare Trust and support from Waipa DC, DOC/Living Water, and Waikato Regional Council, we held a very successful and informative predator trapping workshop. This attracted 40 people from local community groups involved in peat lake restoration and agency staff, who shared ideas and experience in successful predator control.

Many excellent tips were shared and the potential for predator control collaboration initiated.

We appreciate your support and attendance at this event, and also with our preliminary investigations into the potential to return pateke duck to the Waipa Basin. We particularly appreciate the contributions made by David Klee, and your recent PhD candidate Dr Jenn Sheppard for their input on the day. I know the attendees appreciated the technical expertise shared by David and experts from Waikato Regional Council, DOC, and Hamilton Fish and Game.

Please find attached some images of the event. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Auckland-Waikato Fish and Game Council as our plans for the Wetland Centre and potential re-introduction of pateke duck roll out.

Sincerely

Tony Roxburgh
Chair
The National Wetland Trust of New Zealand

Bi Monthly Chief Executive's Report

Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Meeting April 2018

OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Project 5111 Drift diving

Drift dives were completed on the Waihou, Waione and Awakino Rivers. Mischa and Anna both participated in the Waihou and Waione dives.

Project 5112 Banding

All up another good season with plenty of birds around and great catches on the Hauraki Plains, Opuatia and Te Awamutu, which partially compensate for some of the poor catches in other areas. John is busy finding replacements for some of the other northern sites. Some of these have failed to fire for some time and it has become uneconomic to continue with them. Just 16 days after one of our ducks was banded at Opuatia this year, it then surfaced on Mare Island, off New Caledonia. Some years back another of our NZ mallards turned up also 16 days after banding in Vanuatu. While most of our mallards are stay-at-home types, the odd ones have also undergone these heroic long journeys to New Caledonia, Lord Howe Island and so on.

Project 5115 Population Surveys

Botulism: Unfortunately, it's been a terrible year for botulism in our region. We have been busy working with territorial authorities, DoC, WRC and local hunters to organise carcass removal and conduct dispersal activities. We are aware of at least 25 outbreaks that have accounted for over 7000 birds and that is likely to be the tip of the iceberg. Municipal WWTP have again been a significant contributor and potential source for nearby outbreaks. We have also facilitated the training of contractors who are now being hired by some councils to specifically deal with botulism issues on their WWTPs. The publicity associated with the Te Aroha outbreak certainly appears to have had an effect with plant managers being much more receptive to adopting best practice guidelines and communicating botulism issues to us.

Some traditional hotspots, such as Watercare at Mangere & Rosedale, have surprisingly got away with it this year so it is important to keep this in perspective. However 350 ducks, mostly mallards and some shelducks died at the Helensville waste water treatment plant in the last 3-4 weeks. These are being regularly collected by Watercare and buried to limit the spread. Watercare are looking for a local person or persons in Helensville that they can contract in future to do this work and free up their technicians for the work they were employed to do. We have asked them to return any bands they find as this is just 2km away from a banding site. Also tracked down was a Parakai woman who worked for many years for Bird Rescue who offered to help Watercare with any sick birds they recover. Shortly after this John learnt of "hundreds" of birds dying of suspected botulism on the Kaipara River. John then searched the Kaipara River and found 15 dead mallards and 3 shelduck. But there must have been 300 healthy shelducks and 700 equally happy mallards on the River between Mt Rex and the Helensville F&G project. So the botulism problem seems to be isolated to the Watercare wastewater pond and a few birds in the vicinity of it.

Project 5117 Gamebird Research

With the completion of both Jenn's and Katie's theses, we are now working on publishing our results in quality scientific journals. This is something F&G has often failed to do in the past, with much of the earlier research being stored in dusty files, never to be written up and properly disseminated. The next and perhaps most critical step is finding a way of getting the information to hunters and land managers so that management actions stemming from this work can be implemented. David Klee has contributed to writing feature articles for the magazine, but it is questionable whether this is the best way to reach our members.

Project 5121 Harvest Survey

Wild trout tagging programme: Adam has been updating the wild trout tagging data from backcountry fisheries and has requested outstanding data from taggers.

Project 5161 Trout Releases

Adam prepared a report for the managers meeting on triploid trout, at the request of Eastern Fish & Game. The managers have requested that the report is rewritten with contributions from Andy Garrick (Eastern manager) and sent out to the regions for information, but ultimately, it is the call of the two councils involved – Eastern is rearing the fish and Auckland/Waikato in releasing them.

Project 5162 Pheasant Releases

If anyone is looking for a large used incubator, there are 5 in Pokeno that are up for sale. Contact John Dyer for details. They were intended for Muscovy duck breeding.

Pheasant rearing articles: We now have in pdf form a series of old articles in Sporting Gun magazine by an experienced UK gamekeeper Bob Smithson on backyard pheasant rearing. These may be dated but they are still entirely appropriate for small scale backyard hobby breeders. Feedback from those who have so far used the information has been entirely positive.

DoC Permits: DoC now do permits for small scale "hobbyist" gamebird breeders at no charge. No complaints from those we have spoken to about that. Fish & Game staff get asked to comment, so effectively we do the vetting side of it as well as any after-support. Parliament made special provision in 1990 for this authority to be delegated to Fish & Game but this has never happened.

Project 5181 Control.

Permits to disturb/cull issued since September are: mallard – 36, pukeko – 47, paradise shelduck – 17. Mostly for damage to maize/chicory crops/pasture/commercial vegetable crops. Zon guns have also been deployed around the region to disperse birds.

OUTPUT 2: HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

Project 5211 RMA

Ward Ranch action: This continues to consume a lot of my time. The first issue, whether the case is time-barred by the Limitation Act, should be resolved sometime in the next six months.

Clevedon Quarry: Adam and Mischa have managed to settle the Clevedon Quarry negotiations. The quarry improvements will include continual monitoring of turbidity in adjacent streams, installation of a truck wash and paving the access road to prevent dust.

Northland Sportsfish and Game Management Plan: Mischa has been working with the Northland Fish and Game Council to review the Northland Sportsfish and Game Management Plan. Mischa aims to have a draft of the plan prepared for review by the end of March for the Northland Fish and Game Council meeting in April.

Proposed Regional Plan for Northland: Mischa has been working with the Northland Fish and Game Council to case manage the review of the Northland Regional Plan. A submission was made on the 15th of November and further submissions are due on the 26th of March. The hearing is set to take place in July.

Waikato District Plan review: The Waikato District Plan is currently in the process of being reviewed. Mischa prepared a comprehensive submission on our behalf (27 pages). The target date for statutory notification of the Waikato District Proposed Plan where formal submissions can be made is the end of May 2018. This will be followed by a hearing where independent commissioners can hear submissions. Mischa tried to initiate a meeting with the Council to discuss issues raised in our submission however they responded that they are too busy at present. Issues of concern include: wetlands, public access, the right to construct maimai, earthworks in wetland areas, signs, zoning, urban sprawl.

Proposed Pest Management Plan for Auckland: Auckland Council are currently reviewing their Pest Management Plan for the Auckland Region. Of concern to Fish and Game is that fishing for perch, tench and rudd is banned from High Conservation Value Waterbodies; however this is just a follow on from what is set out in the current pest plan. As these species are considered sportsfish the Council are obligated to consult with us regarding their management which they have not. We will be meeting with Council to discuss this issue and will also make a submission on the plan. Submissions close on the 28th of March.

Auckland 10-year Budget and Auckland Plan 2050: The Auckland Council have two consultations happening for long terms plans – both closing on the 28th of March: 10-year Budget and Auckland Plan 2050. The proposals for these two plans are contained in a single consultation document. Mischa will be preparing a submission on Fish and Game's behalf. Of interest is the proposal to invest more in environmental initiatives and to fund this through a targeted rate of either \$21 or \$47 for the average residential ratepayer. One of the objectives of the targeted rates is \$5.35 million to clean up the aquatic pests with emphasis on Lakes Ototoa and Tomarata.

Healthy Rivers Plan Change: We met with the Waikato Regional Council, including DoC, Forest and Bird and the National Wetland Trust, where we gained some insights as to where

the Officer's Report is likely to focus and where other parties are in agreement. We expect the Whangamarino section of the Plan Change to be re-notified shortly with only minor amendments and submissions due on that in Mid-May.

We are now aware that some consents are already being processed under the proposed Plan provisions. Anna is reviewing these to determine whether they would frustrate our submission and whether we need to be notified on such.

Anna and I have also met with Eastern Fish & Game to discuss the joint Fish & Game strategy for Healthy Rivers. We also met with our legal adviser, Sarah Ongley.

Te Kauwhata Proposed Subdivision: The Hearing for this was held in early March. By hearing stage, several changes had been made which were supported by Fish and Game:

- Changes to infrastructure requirements and activity statuses to ensure that a feasible wastewater system could be relied on to support the development when land use consents are determined, and that these consents could be declined if no feasible option was shown to be available.
- Changes to notification status of the lakeside walkway;
- Inclusion of an alligator weed management plan.

At the time of hearing no further amendments had been made to manage the effects of the new land uses (dense living within 32 – 100m and an equestrian centre) on gamebird hunters on the lake, or the effects of increased predation on nearby birdlife at Lakes Waikare and Kopuera. In addition, we sought policies in the plan to recognise the effect of the contaminant load from associated wastewater on Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland. Anna presented evidence on these issues at the hearing and we are waiting to see whether the Commissioners will make amendments to address these matters.

Te Awamutu Wastewater consent applications: Anna made a submission on the consent applications for the Te Awamutu WWTP. The discharge increases the level of some contaminants in the Mangapiko Stream and also downstream in the Waipa and Waikato. The applicants are wanting to fast track the process to a hearing in May. Nevertheless, we continue to liaise with Waipa District Council staff and are hopeful of a negotiated resolution.

Fonterra Te Awamutu: We met with Waikato Regional Council processing officers to discuss our objections to the consent applications for the Te Awamutu WWTP and the Te Awamutu Fonterra dairy factory. Given the significant contributions these two discharges make to the overall contaminant load to the Mangapiko Stream, we want to see both develop meaningful mitigation packages, enshrined in conditions of consent that will lead to upper catchment water quality improvements. Key aims for the catchment are to increase buffer zones and shading.

Long term Plans: Waikato Regional Council and Waikato District Council are currently reviewing their long-term plans. Anna is reviewing the consultation documents to determine whether any issues are relevant to Fish and Game's interests.

Flax Block Water levels: We are yet to receive the report that has been commissioned to determine scheme functionality and help inform water level management in the wetlands. Our position remains, that it was/is inappropriate to implement actions which have drastically

lowered wetland water levels in a short period of time, without a transparent and fully informed process on which to base management decisions.

Whangamarino Weir Section 128 Review: Another meeting is scheduled towards the end of March with DoC and their consultants to discuss the latest technical information and work towards a process of resolving this review. It is our view that DoC and F&G need to take a proactive approach and help find solutions to issues raised.

Waikare/Whangamarino Catchment Management Plan: David attended the meetings aimed at setting the objectives of the CMP. A large number of parties attended including different sectors of the farming community, led by Jim Cotman. An alternative set of objectives were presented by this group and we went through each trying to find a mutually agreeable position. It became clear that there is a hangover from Healthy Rivers PC1 which has led to an element of mistrust and some confusion in regard to the purpose of this non-statutory plan. Notwithstanding the important nature of the receiving environment to F&G, it is questionable whether or not the large time commitment required to put into this process will result in tangible outcomes. It is also apparent that most landowners view us as antagonists and are unaware of the amount of work we do with farmers to help secure funding, improve habitat values and reduce their environmental footprint. It may be worthwhile to put out some P.R. on such, to publicise what F&G does.

Waihou/Piako: I attended a workshop with the local catchment committee to discuss the Piako Scheme review. It's clear that the catchment committee is very keen to work with Fish & Game and other parties to avoid the fiasco and expense that is occurring in the Waikare/Whangamarino catchment.

Meremere Cleanfill site: We met with a consultant working for the applicant and expressed our concerns regarding drainage. Currently some of the clean water from the property flows into our North Shephard Wetland but they are proposing to divert this water to the Waikato River.

Bluff Road Cleanfill site: This application still hasn't been notified.

Crusader Meatworks discharge to land consent (next to the upper Waimiha Stream: Anna prepared a submission on this consent application that included a request for much more comprehensive monitoring of the Waimiha Stream, inclusion of an avian (botulism) management plan, and reductions in nitrogen leaching over the length of the consent.

Project: 5231 Assessment & monitoring

Whanganui Water Samples: Adam collected samples in January and February at 17 sites on the Whanganui. Suspended solids, temperature and conductivity were samples processed by the university of Waikato and based on the initial results and safety the study has been altered to remove two sites prone to flash flooding.

Project 5221 Council Land

North Shephard Wetland: David and Waikato Regional Council technical staff have carried out site visits to assess the suitability of the North Shephard Wetland as a location to build another koi trap, similar to that at Lake Waikare alongside the Whangamarino Weir.

Cathcart Wetland: The original culverts under the NI Main Trunk Line railway that supply the Cathcart Wetland with water from its catchment were largely blocked. John has removed the blockage on our side and has informed Kiwirail about their side. This culvert area is covered in gorse on our side which will be cleared to improve future maintenance. Other railway culverts were also checked that supply the McKenzie Wetland. By coincidence also found in the process were the beehives that we recently asked to be removed from the Dean Wetland. These have since turned up hidden behind gorse on Transit land next to SH1 and above the Cathcart/McKenzie Wetland.

North Emmett Wetland: We have been approached for an area of wetland to develop to offset work done as part of the construction of the proposed Synlait Dairy Factory at Pokeno. We proposed that they clear the choking weed on the North Emmett Wetland and restore the open water there as well as plant the margins in native plants. The offset work should see the wetland back to its former glory after perhaps 5 days of digger work. Gorse that might have interfered with the planting and maintenance of new trees has been sprayed by John so as not to hold up later work. Our new neighbour is quite happy for us to use his property to access the gorse and also has told us that the hideous blue fence on the hill is on borrowed time. Does anyone want the iron?

Dean Wetland: John assisted DoC staff to locate a bittern in the Dean Wetland that carries a radio-tracking device left over from his completed PhD study. The birds use well-trodden paths in swamps. Two cages are placed across these with mirrors at the back of them, one facing each way. A tape recording of another male bittern is played on the cage and this leads the local Romeo straight into the trap looking for his competitor. Similar devices have been used with some success to catch territorial waterfowl. In fact, our decoy-bird cages could be adapted this way if need be.

Grey Teal boxes: John is planning at some point to fit the teal boxes in the Dean/McKenzie Wetlands with lids with 100x100mm squares of translucent plastic, the sort of thing used for house awnings and kindly supplied by PSP Ltd in Hamilton. These disperse sunlight into the corners of the nest box where starlings like to hide their eggs. When the corners are no longer dark, they are not nearly as attractive to starlings, however ducks don't seem to mind. That is the overseas experience and it remains to be seen how well it will work here in NZ where starlings and myna birds are major competitors for duck nest boxes, clogging them with all sorts of debris.

McKenzie Wetland: The McKenzie Wetland is currently being drained by a 300mm dia. concrete pipe set at a very low level. It was once fitted with a flap valve that has either fallen off, rusted out or got jammed open by mud. It now means that the wetland is constantly drawing down and internal water levels are only being held up by the frequent rain of late. It is planned for Neil Rankin to dig out and remove this long forgotten and now redundant structure which has outlived its purpose. John Dyer has removed a wasp nest, (treated with Permex), that was right next to the worksite and otherwise prepared it by chain sawing willows etc. If necessary, it may be possible to block this pipe temporarily with a tapered

willow log cut to fit and then jammed in place until Neil arrives. At the moment rain-in is more or less equalling water-out but a dry-spell could easily alter that.

Project 5231 Other Land

WCEET funded wetland projects: With the unseasonable wet weather again this year we experienced some delays to getting machinery into sites to start wetland projects. With the slightly more settled weather in the last month we have been making up for lost time and have nearly caught up with project timelines. There has been a lot of dialogue between WRC compliance staff and David to ensure that projects can proceed as permitted activities and where RCs are required, ensuring that this is made as smooth as possible for landowners so that large portions of the project budgets don't get swallowed up by council fees.

Evans Road Wetland: Work has commenced on the Evans Road wetland which F&G successfully negotiated as part of the mitigation package. 30,000 m³ of earth need to be shifted within the wetland to ensure the correct hydrological regime is created. The project should be finished by the end of April. We have also received compensation from the contractors for Fisher Road.



Figure 1: Earthworks commencing on the Evans Rd wetland

OUTPUT 3: PARTICIPATION

Project 5311 Access negotiation

Adam reported several access issues to WAMS including an illegal sign on a paper road on the Puniu River reported by councilor Nigel Juby. WAMS staff resolved the issue or are in the process of doing so.

5331 Magazine/newsletters

Game newsletter: Prepared and hopefully in the mail soon.

Project 5341 Other publications

DoC Newsletter: Articles have also been accepted for the DoC bird-banders' newsletter on banded ducks and pukeko that were relocated but came back to the capture site.

DU Flight Mag: Also an article for the Ducks Unlimited "Flight" magazine on F&G trend counts. This includes graphics of the "breadcrumb" grid system we use to cover large harbours to count swans and geese.

Adam hosted a blogger from the USA in National Park to highlight Fish & Game conservation efforts.

I SITES: Adam created and distributed fishing flyers for I-sites. 500 were mailed to I-sites where fishing is likely to occur as an experiment.

OUTPUT 4: PUBLIC INTERFACE

Project 5431 Liaison Advocacy

Waikato RiverCare: David attended bimonthly meeting. We have also been able to purchase plants through RiverCare's annual tender process which means we get them at a heavily discounted rate.

World Wetland Day-Predator Control: David talked at the event which was well attended by representatives from a number of Fish and Game associations currently conducting predator control around the Waipa peat lakes.

OUTPUT 5: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Project 5511 Ranging/Training

Adam has been ranging on his water sampling trips and checking coarse fishing lakes.

Airfield shoot: John recently became aware of shooting in the far distance from a banding site he was working on. On investigating he found 3 young shooters and a number of dead mallards on the ground with another older man joining them after they had been stopped. This was on the property of a skydive club next to an airfield. Normally DoC issue airfields with a carte-blanc permit to cull birds on-site as required to protect life. However, staff changes or whatever, it seems this hasn't always recently been done. So the shooters and the airport official believed they were being quite lawful and that a permit existed. However that proved not to be the case. Quite a few red-faces but hopefully everyone is now a lot wiser in retrospect. Most importantly, the skydive club has a drainage person booked to stop this field flooding, which is what had attracted the birds in the first place. Also gas bangers, not shooters, have been used since to disperse these birds. Staff will continue to monitor this situation to make sure that no more ducks need be culled in future. Ironically this site is opposite the Watercare waste water treatment pond which then experienced a botulism episode this year, the details of which appear elsewhere in this report.

Project 5841 National liaison

Genetic modification: The Royal Society of New Zealand is having a series of workshops to discuss the use of genetic engineering for pest control and healthcare. I prepared a background paper on this subject for the managers meeting with Adam's assistance. Genetic engineering for controlling aquatic pests may sound unlikely but given that both the Auckland & Waikato regional councils are willing to spend huge sums to eliminate aquatic "pests" then it is an issue that could be on the near horizon.

B. Wilson
Chief Executive