



Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game

A Meeting of Council will be held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton, on
Saturday 29 February 2020 commencing at 11.00am

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G. Annan
Vice-Chairman
14/02/2020

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton,
on Saturday 14 December 2019 commencing at 11.30am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: G. Annan

Councillors: G. Avery D. Cocks, W. Howard, A. Kerr, B. Moore, P. Shaw, C. Sherrard,
S. Smith, E. Williamson.

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

Visitors: P. Hardy (DOC), I. Bailey (12.45pm to 2pm)

1. APOLOGIES

M. Young, N. Juby.

It was moved;

that the apologies be accepted.

Sherrard/Smith **CARRIED**

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 12 OCTOBER 2019:

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of 12 October 2019 be accepted as a true
and correct record.

Smith/Kerr **CARRIED**

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

In reply to a question, Mr Wilson stated the triploid rainbow trout held at the Ngongotaha hatchery had not yet been tested to confirm their triploid status.

5 CORRESPONDENCE:

A letter was tabled from Lindsay Lyons, Chairman NZF&GC, informing Councillors of a resolution made by the NZ Council regarding media communication.

Councillors were concerned over the decision by the NZ Council to survey licence holders on freshwater advocacy rather than directly consult with regional fish and game councils. Councillors agreed that this was a move to circumvent the input of councils and

was part of an ongoing strategy by the NZ Council to side-line the regions from advising on national policy and towards centralisation.

It was moved;

that the Chairman of the NZ Council be informed of Councils' concerns regarding his letter of 28 November 2019, especially in regard to the proposed survey of licence holders.

Cocks/Williamson CARRIED

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

Extensive discussion over the numerous waste-water treatment plant consent applications that staff were currently vetting, noting that F&G was usually the only submitter on these consent applications.

Councillors agreed that staff should make more effort on publicising local environmental issues including press releases and newsletter articles to educate the public on what was occurring.

It was moved;

that more effort is given to publicising local environmental issues especially the performance of waste-water treatment plants operated by district councils.

Smith/Williamson CARRIED

Concern was expressed over the damage done by Transpower contractors coming onto F&G properties and damaging stopbanks. Mr Wilson was asked to investigate the rights of contractors regarding access and the potential to impose bonds.

Mr Klee gave an update on the recent botulism seminar noting that many participants were unaware of the magnitude of the problem.

In reply to a question from Councillor Sherrard, Mr Klee stated that he had received no communication from the Huntly Gun Club about the Murray Young Wetland.

Mr Wilson introduced his financial report noting that he was intending to considerably reduce the communication budget by moving to internet phones.

The meeting rose for lunch at 12.45pm and resumed at 1.20pm.

7. GAME SEASON REMITS:

Mr Ian Bailey spoke in support of his submission requesting that the game hunting hours should be half an hour before sunrise and half an hour after sunset.

Extensive discussion ensued with most councillors preferring set hours because they were concerned that licence holders would have difficulty, or not bother, following a table giving sunrise and sunset hours.

It was moved;

that the hunting hours be restricted to 6.30am – 6.00pm to increase hunting efficiency.

Cocks/Howard CARRIED

Councillor Smith requested that his vote in opposition to the motion be recorded.

Councillors discussed the staff reports and recommendations.

It was agreed that;

- The northern paradise shelduck special season be gazetted from 2021 onwards.
- That the current regional ban on drift shooting from camouflaged rowboats on opening weekend is maintained.
- That more publicity and enforcement effort is spent on the ban on hunting from motorised vessels under power.
- That staff should liaise with the Hamilton City Council towards closing off the Hamilton City area for hunting in 2021.

It was moved;

- *that the limit for black swan be increased to 2 birds per day from 1 bird per day in the “all other areas” section.*
- *that the hunting of black swan is limited to the period of the dabbling duck season.*

Sherrard/Shaw CARRIED

The staff recommendation that the bag limit for pheasants be increased from 3 to 5 birds was discussed. Councillor Annan advised that bird numbers were increasing but so were the number of hunters. Mr Klee acknowledged that few hunters were shooting their limits. It was agreed that the pheasant limit should remain at 3.

After future discussion it was moved;

that the remaining regulations remain the same.

Sherrard/Shaw CARRIED

8. GOVERNORS MEETING 23 NOVEMBER 2019:

Councillors received an oral report from Councillor Annan and a brief email from Councillor Juby.

At Councillor Annan's request Councillors reviewed the Power Point presentation by the Chairman of the North Canterbury F&G Council, Mr Alan Strong. Councillors were surprised and disappointed at the sentiments expressed by Mr Strong regarding the need for a review of Fish & Game's structure and function.

There were concerns expressed at the centralisation agenda of the NZF&GC.

9. NZF&GC MEETING 22 & 24 NOVEMBER 2019:

The minutes of the NZF&GC meeting of 22nd and 24th November 2019 were tabled.

10. WARD RANCH UPDATE:

Mr Wilson updated the meeting on the Ward Ranch Limited case, where supporting documents had recently been exchanged. The Plaintiffs are to serve their Brief of Evidence by 28 February 2020. A further Care Management Conference is to be scheduled for the first available date after 7 May 2020.

11. RMA REPORTS:

Mr Wilson tabled the RMA reports prepared by staff that summarised the projects funded by NZF&GC over the last year.

12. 2020 MEETING SCHEDULE:

It was agreed that the proposed 2020 meeting schedule be approved with the following amendments:

- The February meeting to be held on the 29th February
- The August meeting to be held on the 22nd August.

13. OSH REPORT:

The October 2019 OSH report was tabled.

Mr Wilson advised that Dr Daniel had extensive experience and training in the handling of small boats due to his voluntary work with the Raglan Coast Guard. He now had his skipper ticket and would be able to conduct annual training for staff.

14. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Councillor Shaw informed the meeting that the Otorohanga Kiwi House had raised a pair of blue ducks that were now producing eggs, but DOC was not allowing the eggs to hatch. Paul Hardy was asked to comment but replied that he was not informed on this issue.

Councillor Cocks spoke on the considerable benefits derived by licence holders from the land owned by Fish & Game. He emphasised that purchasing wetlands was the best way

to protect them, while the Kakahi property had shown the benefits of purchasing land for angler access.

It was moved;

that when negotiating future mitigation agreements, staff endeavour to negotiate at least 50% of funds towards land purchase and development.

Cocks/Williamson CARRIED

Councillor Howard informed that the Franklin Acclimatisation Society was extending their pest management project upstream to the Tuakau Bridge. The project involved many bait stations including coverage of the kahikatea forests.

Mr Klee advised that the schedule for duck banding would be finalised soon and he would convey these dates to councillors and other interested parties.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 3.50pm.

AGENDA ITEM 5

From: Anita & Graham Pyatt <gapyatt@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, 26 January 2020 3:50 PM
To: Fish & Game Auckland / Waikato Office <aucklandwaikato@fishandgame.org.nz>
Subject: Down my way

Now that I am a resident in Taumarunui I am as they say living the dream with the Wanganui river 3 minutes from home and the Whakapapa the Manganuiateo the Retaruki and numerous smaller streams relative close to hand.

My initial thoughts in regards to the fishing is one of surprise as the majority of anglers appear to overlook the l

Wanganui waters that run through the town where the fishing has been superb long may it continue.

Elsewhere it is of a similar picture with even the Whakapapa seeing relatively low midweek pressure but this increases dramatically at weekends but still the catch rate for many continues to be very good.

It is obvious from my observations how Czhech nymphing is now the mainstay of many and from having recently spending a day with a master of the craft it is of little surprise if the catch rate was anything go by but each to their own.

The cicadas are almost in full voice down here can't wait.

Finally I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Adam for taking the time to show me and a friend the best access point to the Whakapapa by the Owhango bridge .

Tight lines

Keep up the good work

All the best

Graham Pyatt.

From: Anne Julian <kandajulian@xtra.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 29 January 2020 7:07 a.m.
To: Allen Stancliff <astancliff@fishandgame.org.nz>
Subject: Feedback re/ ranger

Dear Alan

We were in the National Park area over the New Year period and a ranger Adam was there. We wanted to give some positive feedback in regards to how he interacted with us and others, I am not sure if the Owhango area in in Taranaki Region? So if it is not your area can you kindly pass this onto the correct person?

Adam came to us checking husbands fishing license, He was very friendly and positive but also quite clear about what the rules are, he was a positive interaction with ourselves and others that he interacted with.

He was proactive and clearly a person in the right job, his manner was spot on for the role he was conducting.

His balance between rules and enjoyment was comforting.

We wanted to pass on our thanks to Adam for his guidance and conversation and for the manner in which he conducted himself,

He is to be commended for the way he represents Fish & Game and services the community he is in.

Thanks,
Anne & Kevin Julian.

Bi Monthly Chief Executive's Report

Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Meeting February 2020

OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Project 1111 – Drift Diving

Drift dives were completed at the Awakino, Waihou, Waimac and Mangatutu rivers. All were running low but had normal amount of fish numbers. The Waihou river had plenty of large fish for this time of the year. The only concern was significant algal growth and very high-water temperatures.

Project 5112 - Banding.

Banding: It has been a mixed bag at banding sites but overall the results are disappointing. We were at a new site on the Hauraki Plains, as the farm we have banded on previously has been sold. The botulism outbreak occurring in the area may also have reduced numbers as the banding site is not far from the drain where we picked up 800 or so carcasses early in the New Year. Dead ducks were also picked up on the nearby river during banding and botulism affected birds were captured in the cages. This is a first for us, although the majority recovered after a few days with fresh water and good quality feed. Some of our banded birds have subsequently been recovered curing botulism clean-up operations. These types of non-harvest mass mortality events have the potential to confound some of the information we obtain from banding and is difficult to account for.

Catches at Te Awamutu and Helensville were good but the Opuatia site was below average. We will be changing banding locations here next year and if necessary. We will look to feed out 2 sites, like Te Awamutu in order to try and boost our catch rate. Whilst Wellsford was above average, this site is still performing poorly overall and the aka aka site was pretty much a bust this year. Given we feed out similar amounts of grain across all sites, we need to catch a minimum of 250-300 birds per site to make the exercise worthwhile and achieve our annual target of 3000 birds. John has many ideas of how he can improve things at aka aka and the Wellsford capture locations, which may involve finding other sites and is confident that he will be able to get more ducks next year.

Table 1: Banding site bird numbers

| Banding Location | Site Manager | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|------------------|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Hauraki Plains | David Klee | 1153 | 1171 | 1422 | 1818 | 1449 | 1224 | 881 |
| Te Awamutu | David Klee | 502 | 417 | 557 | 786 | 806 | 478 | 646 |
| Opuatia | David Klee | 284 | 355 | 322 | 399 | 517 | 148 | 247 |
| AkaAka | John Dyer | 181 | 274 | 264 | 507 | 399 | 0 | 48 |
| Helensville | John Dyer | 254 | 526 | 570 | 708 | 487 | 472 | 519 |
| Wellsford | John Dyer | 179 | 224 | 97 | 165 | 35 | 50 | 151 |
| TOTAL | | 2553 | 2967 | 3232 | 4383 | 3693 | 2372 | 2492 |

Banding at Wellsford this year was twice as good as the last 2 years combined. However, 151 birds were still a good 100 or so under expectation when considering how many birds were by then using the adjacent pond. The recurring problem at this site is interference by turkeys who are quick to find the free maize bait we use and then intimidate the ducks away. We all know how cautious mallards can be and this is one more expression of it. We removed 67 turkeys to stop this happening this year, but those left still filled the first cage both days – the most productive cage closest the pond.

John Macpherson, the new Kaitaia based field officer from Northland F&G assisted us on both days. Graham Gallagher, the new Whangarei based Northland field officer also assisted us with Parakai where this year we banded 517 new birds. This year we struggled for helpers at Parakai, (just 3 helpers in total Saturday), so both Graham and later John's help was most appreciated. Over 50 people were directly invited to assist us banding including many representing clubs and organisations.

Banding at Aka Aka has struggled a bit after we lost our good pond there. The Sands' family came to the rescue and live only a kilometre or so away. A similar pond meant we could probably carry on as previously but the opportunity to trap beside a maize-silage heap was targeted instead. The heap-face was covered with a net to force birds to use our cage-bait, however it turned out that a second heap of last-years silage was the one the birds switched to. We screened the base of this with all the spare cage sections available, but then learnt belatedly that the ducks were apparently going in the dark to the top of this second heap which was where it was being regularly topped up. When we pulled a spare silver coloured plastic cover over it to stop this, the birds didn't like the sudden change, despite there being a similar silver cover on the first heap. They refused to go back to the site on the Sunday, landing in the nearby paddock and then all spooking away. So the catch was just 48 for the weekend, all in the 3 cages closest the second heap. Next year we'll just trap beside the pond where these various complicating issues can be avoided.

A juvenile female mallard banded at Pipiroa on 13 January this year was recovered 1,970km away, exhausted but otherwise OK just over 3 weeks later in Lifou Island. This is part of the Loyalty group of islands to the immediate east of New Caledonia. It is now in the hands of a local vet, (who notified DoC of the band number), along with a couple of unbanded mallards. Could all 3 have arrived together? Most NZ mallards are sedentary and live and die within 25km of where they were born, but in odd cases individual birds seem to make such heroic journeys.



Photo: NZ Banded duck recovered at Lifou Island, New Caledonia.

By comparison, the average US mallard migrates around 1,400-km. There is research to suggest that genetically our NZ mallard is much more of the British strain than the American one, though both types were introduced here. British mallards fall into 2 groups; the majority that annually migrate to Europe and the remainder that stay at home. Of course, now that they are in NZ that migratory pattern is interrupted, but perhaps it is still in the subconscious of some birds. What is uncanny is their ability to find islands such as Lifou which is just 80-km long by 40-km wide in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

Lifou is a Pacific paradise. When John Dyer posted this recovery on Facebook, he has had several keen offers from local hunters who have packed their suntan lotion to follow this up with him.

Project - 1116 Trend Counts.

The Northern shelduck trend count, completed by Northland F&G manager Rudi Hoetjes and his new staff member Graham Gallagher was well up; 4,846 this year compares with 3,370 last year. However, this 2020 count includes a few more ponds than last year. If we take the 7 ponds regularly counted every year, the numbers are still well up; 3,880 (2020), to 3,170, (2019). Consequently, a special shelduck season is being held in the area “north of the Harbour Bridge” to disturb large shelduck flocks off paddocks and ponds. The opening will coincide with the Northland one. Pukeko are also included to assist farmers having issues with maize damage. This is the last year that we will require a permit. In future, such seasons will be Gazetted in advance and so anyone with a gamebird licence, (or a land-occupier hunting on their own land), can hunt parries without need to contact the office first.

The Swan trend count in the Waikato and Western Harbours this year totalled 4,977 which compares with 4,177 last year.

Since we are flying over them anyway, we note Canada goose numbers in the Waikato and Western Harbours. This year was down; 8,528 compares with 14,494 last year.

Project 1121 - Harvest Survey

Tags for the wild trout tagging program were received at the end of January and are now available for taggers.

Project 1161 - Trout Releases

Of the fifty two-year-old rainbows released by Fish and Game for the 2020 Tokoroa take a kid fishing day, only three were caught. Indicating the competition did not have a huge impact on the local fish population despite 300 children showing up. The biggest fish of contest was a 3.3kg rainbow

Project 1172 – Game Gazette

The draft game gazette was completed. Two of the five pheasant properties with special conditions have indicated that this will be there las year.

Project 1181 – Gamebird Control

Botulism: David Klee has been involved in organising and coordinating clean-up operations. At the time of writing this report we have now found dead birds all over the Hauraki plains, with the Piako river system impacted from the mouth right up to and including the Kopuatai wetland and surrounds. At this point of time it appears to be one of the worst years we have had.

The first outbreak occurred on a drain running parallel to the Firth of Thames foreshore, between the Piako and Waitakaruru rivers. After discovering the outbreak on the 9th of January 2020, David had over 30 people turn up the next day to assist, which definitely exceeded expectations. The majority were hunter volunteers from the Upper Piako Wetland Management Association, but representatives from WRC, DOC, Iwi and bird rescue were also represented. WRC also organised a digger to be on site in order to bury the carcasses. Despite the rush to get things organised the day went extremely well with the entire 14km stretch of drain cleared by 13 teams and 600-800 carcasses removed, with a handful of sick birds handed to Bird Rescue. Unfortunately, the outbreak appeared to have been happening for at least 3-4 weeks, so the operation was much more about damage control rather than rescue and rehab. David has tried to contact all the farmers in this area and inform them about the issue, so hopefully in future we will be called earlier if it reoccurs.

We are working with the local drainage engineers to create an environment which will make it less likely that outbreaks will occur in the future. After the clean-up WRC back flushed the system and doing this more frequently during summer which should help avoid low DO events or drawdowns that lead to fish kills and may also reduce water temperatures. If one side of the drains could be planted to provide some overhead cover and shade, that may also help reduce temperatures.

Since the initial outbreak, we have had reports of bird deaths right throughout the Piako and parts of the Waihou catchment. Approximately 1500 birds primarily ducks but also some swan, shags, herons and seagulls have been picked up. This is likely to be only a small

portion of the birds that have died given the tidal nature and difficulties of accessing the area impacted.

OUTPUT 2 HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

Project 1211 RMA

Open Country Dairy: We've heard nothing from the applicant since our last meeting. Revised conditions have not been supplied and we do not hold much hope that any of our concerns have been addressed. The regional council's section 42A report is due out later this week and it will be interesting to see what position they take on the new summer discharge that is being sought, even under low conditions. The hearing is scheduled for the middle of March and much will depend on what position WRC take.

Lumbercorp and Max Birt meetings: We have received draft minutes for both meetings. Some progress has been made with the applications, but the proposed consent conditions still need substantial changes in order to give us some greater certitude that improvements will be achieved and previous problem causing noncompliance adequately addressed.

Thames WWTP: David had a skype meeting with the applicants and consultants. The AEE and response to our submission repetitively claims that there will be no increases in discharge volume or contaminant loading, however this does not reconcile with proposed conditions. For example, as drafted the consent would allow for more than a doubling in phosphorous concentration over existing monitored concentrations, coupled with an increase in daily volume discharged. Which if realised would equate to an almost tripling of total phosphorous load. We have asked TCDC to revise their conditions and come back to us once they reflect what is proposed in the application. They also have had experiences with big botulism outbreaks, with 647 birds lost to date this summer. Sick and dead birds have also spread to nearby areas including the Thames Marina and foreshore. The applicants have already agreed to adopt a botulism management plan based on our template and include a condition in their consent.

Kinleith Pulp & Paper Mill: The Oji Fibre Solution's staff and consultants met with the Fish & Game team to discuss the future of wetlands in the Kinleith wastewater discharge. The parent company has informed the managers of the mill that they are not happy with the outdated WWTP and instructed them to upgrade the plant as soon as possible. The water quality will be greatly improved and could provide waterfowl habitat as it flows through a series of dams and eventually into the Waikato River.

Healthy Rivers Plan Change 1 update: Commissioners' recommendations have not yet been released and we have received no further information on when this is likely. The Council is required to make a decision on PC1 by the end of April.

"Healthy Environments" - Waikato Resource Management Plan: WRC is doing a holistic review of the Waikato Regional Plan and Waikato Regional Coastal Plan to put them into a single *Waikato Resource Management Plan* (WRMP). The process is called "Healthy Environments" and is being broken into two phases, with consultation form 2020-2022 and

an operative plan expected in 2028. Phase 1 reviews the Coastal Plan; phase 2 reviews the Waikato Regional Plan. PC 1 will eventually also become part of the WRMP.

WRC have released a discussion document for phase 1. Initial consultation on this, closes at the end of Feb 2020 (the formal Schedule 1 notification would be expected to occur mid 2021). It is important that we ensure the coastal component of the plan reflects desired outcomes and ecosystem health-based limits for the final receiving environments of our key rivers, and fish and game values (ie, estuaries for hunting and forage). We have already advocated for these matters in the Waikato in PC1. We are also flagging avian botulism as a matter of increasing importance for the WRC to consider in these environments

Waikato District Plan: Key hearing dates are likely to be June (Rural, Ohinewai Proposals) and August (Significant Natural Areas). We are currently working towards allocating evidence to support our submission, particularly for the rural hearing. Ben spoke at the hearing on *Definitions* and our submission on this issue was accepted in full.

Ohinewai/ Ambury Development: Several meetings with parties representing the Sleepyhead Development have taken place recently. A detailed review of their proposals identified several areas where further information is required for Fish & Game to assess their proposal before the Waikato District Plan Change Hearing in June 2020. This information relates primarily to wastewater production volumes, treatment options and the need to consider different water levels in flood modelling of Lake Waikare and the associated impacts on the Whangamarino Wetland. We've also highlighted the need for covenants covering reverse sensitivity (preventing complaints from nearby recreational shooting) and prohibition of cat ownership within any land titles if the development goes ahead. These were taken onboard by the Developers. Wetland improvement options were discussed with a focus on improving the amenity of the area and preventing avian botulism outbreaks through careful design and management. DOC and Iwi have also made comments on this proposal with much of these aligning with Fish & Game's concerns. It is anticipated that further meetings to examine these further shall take place over the coming months.

Waitomo Wastewater Treatment Plan: Further to December's update, we have submitted to Waikato Regional Council on Tourism Holdings' application to continue to discharge 97m3/day of poorly treated wastewater effluent into the Waitomo Stream. The submission highlighted the 5-year delay in site improvements, consenting and the continued breaches of the site's Resource Consent. Furthermore, suitable measure to improve the treatment process at the site where highlighted by Fish & Game as a vital step in improving the effluent quality and downstream ecosystem health. This application may go to a hearing if Tourism Holdings are unable to resolve these issues with us and Waikato Regional Council.

Cambridge WWTP: We filed a submission opposing the Waipā District Council's applications to renew the Cambridge Wastewater Treatment Plant Consents on the basis that the conditions of the consents were not to the required standard. The application was disappointing, seeking a bare minimum of actions in the term of consent, with no clear direction for long term improvements or for development of a plan, high limits for nutrients, and relaxed limits for suspended sediment and biological oxygen demand. The plant has been performing poorly. Issues of projected population increases and the plant's ability to

handle both existing flows and significantly increased loads were drivers for the consent application for a long-term solution lodged (and then shelved) in 2011. Since then, little observable progress has cumulated in significant non-compliance in 2018. The existing consents expired on 1 December 2016 (operating under s124 RMA since that time). The current application, notified 3 years later and seeking a term of 6 years, brings the period between expiry and the upgrades now signalled to at least 9 years. We raised our concerns with the delay, consent conditions, poor performance of the plant in the submission.

AWFG Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plan: Anna has been reviewing the legal component of the draft Proposed Plan. This is our ten-year plan which expires at the end of the year. Progress has been slow but staff were informed last year that this is a priority project due to its statutory status.

National Developments: The Government has sought feedback from the National Office on its “issues and options” paper for a more holistic review of the RMA; the National Office is providing a submission and sought regional feedback on this. Anna attended a day-long workshop for RMA staff to work through the Government’s paper and subsequently provided comment on a draft submission put together by staff at the National office. A final draft has not been seen yet, but we would hope it reflects issues faced in the Auckland/Waikato region around urban expansion into rural areas, and difficulties in managing cumulative effects.

Puke Coal: The Resource Consent application from Puke Coal Ltd, Pukemiro is currently under review. The application covers their stormwater management as part of their consents for coal mining and municipal solid waste landfilling operations. With the requirement for the removal of all landfill leachate from the site for treatment elsewhere, it is hoped the effluent quality of the site’s stormwater will improve. However, there is little data to show the quality of stormwater discharges to Waitawhara Stream (a tributary of Lake Waahi) and as such it is difficult to assess the effects this would have. We have been liaising with DOC on this and have made a submission to Waikato Regional Council.

Project 5221 – Council Land

A comprehensive resource consent application is shortly to be lodged with Waikato District Council to do our annual maintenance work on Council properties. The new Plan places many of our properties in a category now called “Significant Natural Areas” and this restricts earthworks without a consent to 50m3 volume and/or 250m2 area.

The Waikato Regional Council have applied in similar fashion for comprehensive consents for all their extensive flood works. It could be argued that our application is little different to theirs. Our drain and stop bank maintenance, as well as repairs to culverts, sluices and other devices in our blocks, (for instance, from flood damage), is being applied for in a similar way. Interestingly we have been instructed in a court action to continue to maintain our wetland drain in the Cocks Wetland, something we have had little trouble doing until now. Under the Drainage Act we are required to keep these drains open, to assist adjoining farmers keep their land cleared of floodwaters, as these often have to go through our land. The District Council don’t seem to have looked too deeply into the many ramifications of their new rule.

Project 1231 – Other Land

Wetland Site Visits and funding applications: David conducted another 3 wetland site visits and helping 2 landowners prepare funding applications to WCEET, due at the end of March.

Wetland Works: David has started the earthworks component on the first of 3 wetland projects being conducted this summer. The projects are funded by landowners, WCEET, GBHT and WRC. The Inghams mitigation fund which we successfully negotiated as part of the consenting for their site in Waitoa is also part funding one of the projects.

Lake Otamangakau discharge into the upper Whanganui River: Genesis staff have met with Ben, Adam and Jane about the Lake Otamangakau discharge. Adam presented some mass load data that indicated the discharge was at times three times worse than the Fonterra plant in Te Rapa in terms of TSS. Genesis has agreed to look at the impact of the discharge, but they have not completed the details of the contract. Genesis also agreed to investigate the stranded fish documented by Adam during the water quality study. Adam will be working with Genesis to conduct a stranded fish survey when the system is shut down.

OUTPUT 3 PARTICIPATION

Project 1311 Access negotiation

Upper Whakapapa River: The Whakapapa Intake Road closure is still ongoing despite DoC having internal opinions that state there should be driving access. DoC has also been presented with information from WAMS confirming a gross easement over the disputed access and being informed that another road on the property with the same easement is open to driving access. Adam will visit the regional office to have a face to face with DoC staff at the end of the month. This appears to be an open and shut case for DoC, so staff are frustrated there has been no action. Martin Taylor has written to Lou Sanson (director of DoC) about the lack of action taken on such an important access.

Project 1341 – Magazine/Supplement

The four-page A/W supplement for the 2020 Game Magazine was completed.

Project 1341 – Other Publications

Reel Life has been focused on communicating the Whakapapa Intake issue as we have received many angry calls on the lack of access.

OUTPUT 4: PUBLIC INTERFACE

Project 1431 - Liaison advocacy

The Red Data List is a way that endangered populations can be monitored world-wide. Mr Dyer followed up a personal request from the organisers for background information about brown teal. In particular, the role that Auckland Acclimatisation Society played by firstly putting Closed Game Area status on 3 of the key brown teal habitats on Gt Barrier Island, (around 1950), and secondly by subsequently protecting all dabbling ducks on Gt Barrier Island, (from around 1959 onwards). We still Gazette this restriction each year. Gt Barrier

Island was the last stronghold of this species in NZ, but more recently brown teal have been bred and released at a number of points on the mainland, including in our region at Coromandel. Hunters need to take special care to recognize and not shoot brown teal, (and also NZ scaup), that may be expanding from these locations. Mr Dyer added that he has seen this species in the wild a number of times some distance from these liberation points.

A recent study showed that the biggest threat to brown teal survivorship is currently harrier hawk predation. Recent legal changes in the Wildlife Act have made it possible to shoot or trap harrier hawks that are threatening native species at recovery locations. However, while this might help DoC and their volunteers, once brown teal leave the protection of these areas, they are on their own as hunters and landowners are not able to control harriers to protect broods of game species of ducks, not even the threatened grey duck. So, the narrowly written legal exemption means that in practise there is no incidental benefit to brown teal sharing these same locations.

OUTPUT 5 LAW ENFORCEMENT

Project 1511 – Ranging/Training

Adam has checked three anglers in Huntly. NZ police issued offence notices to two individuals at the Blue Springs walkway, who were allegedly fishing without a licence and in possession of illegal drugs.

Project 1531 – Legal

Adam attended the Check Clean Dry national refresh meeting in Auckland to expand and renew the program. Adam also investigated a possible koi incursion for Eastern Region south of Arapuni.

**B. Wilson,
Chief Executive**