

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 176<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND  
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW  
ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 13<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2019 AT 12.00PM**

**Present**

Crs Murray Ferris, Barry Roderick, Lindsay Lyons, Laurance Tamati, Geoff Thomas, Ngahi Bidois, Ken Coombes, and Alan Baird.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson, Matt McDougall, Anthony van Dorp, Lynne Sands, Mark Sherburn, John Meikle, Eben Herbert, Matt Osborne, John Meikle, Carmel Veitch, and Lloyd Gledhill (Eastern Fish & Game); Dave Conley (Department of Conservation).

**1.0 WELCOME AND KARAKIA**

1.1 Cr Murray Ferris (Chairman) opened the meeting at 12.10pm, welcomed all present and invited Cr Ngahi Bidois to perform a karakia.

**2.0 APOLOGIES**

2.1 Apologies were received from Crs David Woolner and Adam Rayner.

2.2 *Agreed (Alan Baird/Ken Coombes) that the apologies for the 176<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [19/06/2.2]*

**3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (11 APRIL 2019)**

3.1 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Ngahi Bidois) that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2019 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [19/06/3.1]*

3.2 Cr Lindsay Lyons had been led to believe by a New Zealand Council office staff member that the agenda item on Health and Safety should be considered following acceptance of the minutes from the previous meeting. Andy Garrick queried whether this was in relation to health and safety matters to be aware of on the day, or the bi-monthly report on Health and Safety activities which was included in the agenda under the Operational Reports section. Lindsay was under the impression that it had applied to both. Council supported the inclusion of a health and safety briefing at the commencement of the meeting for visitors attending, but felt it was appropriate to review the Health and Safety update report with the rest of the operational reports.

**4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY**

4.1 *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Laurance Tamati) that Item 11.6 relating to an increase in the proposed donation for the children's fishing programme be included in Council policy. [19/06/4.1]*

**5.0 MATTERS ARISING**

5.1 Cr Barry Roderick wished to confirm whether the proposed Game Bird Hunting Code of Conduct had provided for the recovery of injured birds? Matt McDougall confirmed that it had.

5.2 Andy Garrick provided a response to questions raised by Cr Barry Roderick at the April meeting about Eastern staff numbers and the extent to which this region contributes to national initiatives. Andy informed Council that the Eastern Council's combined staff contribution to national projects and assistance to the Hawke's Bay Fish and Game

Council amounted to almost one FTE for the 2017-18 financial year, but added that it is difficult to put an exact measurement on this as staff are constantly liaising with other regions and national office staff as they are with us, and for pragmatic reasons a substantial amount of this time is likely to be coded to Eastern work programmes rather than national liaison. Andy noted that there is a lot of give and take within the organisation, and that other Fish & Game regions also contribute to national initiatives. Having nine full time staff and three part timers with a diverse range of skills and considerable depth of experience means that we are in a better position to be able to assist with external programmes than many other regions. Andy pointed out that while this region was considered by some to be 'overstaffed', a considerable amount of staff time involved with external projects was contracted out on a cost recovery basis which needed to be taken into account when concerns were raised that we were overstaffed. Andy concluded by saying that rather than seeing Eastern Region as being overstaffed, Fish & Game needed to recognise that a number of other regions and the organisation as a whole was in fact, understaffed given the statutory obligations we were expected to deliver on.

## **6.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS**

- Cr Alan Baird – Update on Upland Game Preserves
- Cr Alan Baird – Introduction of grey teal to the game bird hunting schedule
- Cr Barry Roderick – Recovery of game birds
- Cr Lindsay Lyons – Plastic in the environment
- Cr Barry Roderick – Catfish update

## **7.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER**

7.1 No conflicts of interest were identified.

## **8.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2019 – 2020 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN**

8.1 Andy Garrick updated Council on the changes that had been made to the 2019-20 Operational Work Plan since the last draft had been circulated which included the contestable fund bid for a CPI increase to Salaries (submitted to and subsequently approved by the NZ Council), and re-allocation of staff time within the plan. Andy added that the proposed contestable fund allocations were still subject to approval of the licence fees by the Minister.

8.2 Cr Barry Roderick wished to applaud the staff who prepare the OWP acknowledging the considerable work involved in its preparation.

8.3 *Agreed (Alan/Baird/Lindsay Lyons) that Council receives the latest 2019-20 draft Budget and Operational Work Plan and approves that it be circulated to clubs and interested parties for comment. [19/06/8.3]*

## **9.0 2019-2020 LICENCE FEES**

9.1 Andy Garrick informed Council that the 2019-20 Licence Fees paper was largely for information purposes only as the deadline for providing feedback to the New Zealand Council this year had been brought forward to 29 May. The agenda item did however, provide an opportunity to discuss the proposed fees and/or process if Council wished to. The change in the NZC deadline meant that it had been necessary to circulate the paper to Council earlier by email, in order to provide feedback within the required deadline. Andy had received responses from most Councillors, and concern had been raised that there had been no opportunity for a proper discussion to have taken place

- around this table. He said that much of the feedback received supported reverting to the timelines the organisation used to work to, to ensure that this can occur in the future.
- 9.2 Cr Murray Ferris noted that licence fees cannot continue to increase and that there was a need to look at alternative sources of revenue. Andy Garrick acknowledged this but commented that the current increase was not unreasonable if looked at in the context of inflation, and that CPI adjustments were necessary in his opinion to ensure we can continue to deliver what is expected and required of us.
- 9.3 Cr Barry Roderick commented that some regions' operational budgets were very similar, yet there were considerable differences in how much licence revenue each of those regions brought in, and queried the background to that? Andy Garrick noted that regardless of the income each region generated, each required sufficient funding to carry out its fundamental statutory duties, hence the need for some regions to be topped up from the national pool. He did say however, that it was his understanding that there was some discussion taking place around this at a national level. Staff also pointed out that a region's licence sales were not necessarily reflective of the number of users of that region's resources or the operational and resource management needs of that region. Examples of this were the extent to which Auckland/Waikato licence holders took advantage of fish and game opportunities within the Northland and Eastern regions, while West Coast resources were a target for Central South Island licence holders and those from other South Island regions. Carmel Veitch understood that in 1991 base funding levels were established, and the protocol was that any increases to those base funds required approval from Managers and the New Zealand Fish and Game Council via a contestable funding process. Cr Lindsay Lyons highlighted the increase in staffing from 1991 when Fish & Game was made up of 40 staff members whereas it numbers 76 today. He confirmed that there was to be some consideration on the subject at a national level to determine whether the current situation was fair and equitable.
- 9.4 Andy Garrick commented that while a number of audits of regions had been undertaken recently, none of these focussed specifically on operational matters to identify how consistent regions were in terms of the resourcing they put into specific programmes and each of the various functional areas Fish & Game is obligated to. Lindsay agreed, and advised that periodic audits would continue to be undertaken and that these would focus on different things. He commented that it may be possible to undertake these internally, but however it was done it needed to be transparent.
- 9.5 Cr Barry Roderick queried the level of funds being put into legal processes through the New Zealand Council administered legal fund. Cr Lindsay Lyons advised that the level of funding allocated to the legal fund had been scaled back with more focus being placed on communication and settling out of court. Andy Garrick advised that he and Eben Herbert had been tasked with working on the criteria for more objectively ranking applications to the legal fund with the aim hopefully, of reducing the extent to which litigation was required. There was a need to better evaluate the return on investment of the legal funds spent and whether we were achieving the outcomes we wanted to. Barry noted that the Eastern Region drew down relatively little from the legal fund for environmental processes, and that it would be interesting to see what the total expenditure of some of the other regions would be if their legal spending was included within that total.
- 9.6 Cr Lindsay Lyons commented that an increase in the fishing licence fee of approximately \$3 each year which kept in pace with inflation would mean that regions would not have to dip into their reserves each year to offset inflationary costs, nor have to put fees up by a more significant amount if fees weren't increased each year as

occurred when the Minister declined to increase the licence fee a few years back. Cr Murray Ferris felt that fishing licence fees were reasonable compared with the price of everything else. Staff also commented that while they often hear grumbles about the cost of licences while in the field, when other costs such as fuel, tackle, ammunition, and food and accommodation expenses are pointed out, these licence holders generally acknowledge that the licence fee is a small component of the overall cost of their recreational past time.

- 9.7 Cr Ngahi Bidois noted that fish licence sales were down for this region, but game licence sales had not been affected. Andy Garrick advised that this region's fish licence sales had been on a downward trend for some time and that the proposed R3 work would hopefully find some answers, the overall aim being to increase participation and lift licence sales performance. Cr Barry Roderick queried Dave Conley regarding the Department of Conservation's ten-year licence sales performance for the Taupo fishery? Dave informed Council that the Taupo fishery licence sales results were not dissimilar to what was occurring in the Eastern Region, though he felt that they could possibly be at the bottom of the curve as the last two years had been relatively stable. The 24-hour licence was a huge category for them, and this had seen a consistent drop off in numbers since the early 2000s. This had been attributed to declining tourist participation with so many alternative activities now available. Cr Ken Coombes understood that the new Taupo family licence was a hit with anglers, and Dave confirmed this advising that they would be taking a closer look at the number of participants captured under this new category. Dave was interested in the work Fish & Game was doing on R3 and felt that this would be beneficial for the Taupo fishery also.
- 9.8 Cr Murray Ferris reiterated earlier comments with regard to informing the New Zealand Council of this Council's concerns over the licence fee setting/consultation process, and the need for regional councils to have sufficient time for discussion to occur.
- 9.9 ***Agreed (Murray Ferris/Ken Coombes) that Council requests Andy Garrick write to the New Zealand Council advising its concern over this year's licence fee consultation process and requests that in future this be timed to allow Council to discuss this annual statutory obligation at their scheduled Council meeting. [19/06/9.9]***

## **10.0 SPORTS FISHING REGULATIONS**

- 10.1 Andy Garrick advised Council that each year, the recommended Anglers Notice regulations for the year coming, after consultation with interested parties, needed to be forwarded to the Minister of Conservation. He said that Council had passed a resolution in 2012 to undertake a comprehensive review of the Anglers Notice biennially rather than every year, and noted that 2019 was an intervening year and a full formal review was not required until next year. Andy advised that no matters warranting urgent consideration had come to staff's attention over the past twelve months, and that being so, staff recommended the status quo apply for 2019-2020 unless Councillors had concerns they wanted addressed now.
- 10.2 ***Agreed (Laurance Tamati/Alan Baird) that Council agrees the status quo should apply for the 2019-2020 Anglers Notice. [19/06/10.2]***
- 10.3 Andy advised Council that the last full review of the Anglers Notice, undertaken in 2018, had aimed to simplify regulations and had resulted in some dramatic changes to the Fly Fishing Only restrictions on the Rotorua Lakes. He said it would be useful to have another look at opportunities for simplifying regulations, and based on last year's experience, there was merit in commencing this process well ahead of next year's

- formal review. Andy advised that there were undoubtedly some other areas that could have restrictions removed, and suggested it would be useful for Council to give some thought to opportunities they might see too.
- 10.4 To facilitate this Matt Osborne provided a brief presentation informing Council that the process to simplify the Anglers Notice aligned with the objectives of the R3 programme in removing barriers to participation and increasing opportunity. Matt advised that only positive feedback had come from the changes to Fly Fishing Only rules on the Rotorua lakes, and provided some examples of other areas within the region that could potentially accommodate some changes. Cr Ngahi Bidois advised that no issues had been observed at the Awahou stream mouth since spin fishing had been introduced there. He said it was pleasing to see the young spin anglers showing a lot of respect to the older fly anglers, and while spinning may not be as successful as fly fishing, it introduced kids to fishing and in due course they might have a go at fly fishing. Cr Murray Ferris felt that Council needed to support such changes and make more decisions along these lines adding that there was no reason that rules couldn't be reconsidered if they resulted in unforeseen issues.
- 10.5 Cr Ken Coombes asked whether further perch had been found in Tauranga? Matt Osborne advised that only two had been found to date. Cr Barry Roderick advised that an earlier review of the Anglers Notice saw a suggestion to allow bait fishing in Lake Okareka but this was not successful due to the risk of anglers introducing coarse fish there. He asked whether this argument still held since catfish had now been found in the Rotorua lakes. Andy Garrick suggested there was nothing to prevent the pros and cons of bait fishing from being reconsidered if Council wished to.
- 10.6 Barry also queried moving the opening of the Ngongotaha Stream from 1 December to 1 October to align with the new season and opening of the three big lakes. Matt Osborne advised that the underlying reason for the December opening related to the prolonged period over which rainbow trout spawned and the perceived importance of the stream in terms of maintaining fish stocks in Lake Rotorua. Cr Lindsay Lyons supported Barry's proposal as he felt the population of fish in Lake Rotorua was high and could potentially accommodate this change.

## **11.0 PRESENTATION BY MATT OSBORNE**

### **“A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A FISHERIES MANAGER”**

- 11.1 Matt Osborne presented by power point an overview of Eastern Region's fisheries monitoring programmes which were undertaken over the course of the year. These included summer and winter boat based creel surveys, winter shoreline surveys, competition data analysis, and the Datawatch tag programme. Matt also provided an update on the Lake Tarawera food web and acoustic smelt monitoring programme, and provided some examples of work undertaken on water quality monitoring, escapement trapping, and river drift dive monitoring.
- 11.2 Andy Garrick noted that staff had given a number of presentations to Council such as these since the end of last year, and invited Council to identify other topics that they might want to have a greater insight to. Cr Murray Ferris suggested it would be useful for Council to get a feel of everything that we do, and Cr Ngahi Bidois asked if it was possible for Councillors to come along and observe some of these activities. Andy answered in the affirmative.

## **12.0 NATIONAL PROSECUTION POLICY**

- 12.1 Andy Garrick advised that Council had been asked to provide feedback on the National Prosecution Policy and invited Anthony van Dorp to provide some background to this. Anthony said that the policy update was required due to the removal of reparation as a tool for settling minor infringements, and the resulting need to refer all matters through the Courts with diversion an option for settling many of these. The proposed Infringement Notice system and policy around that also needed to be incorporated into the National Prosecution policy. Anthony advised that the goal of the two new policies was to have all regions acting in a consistent manner and within the law when dealing with offences.
- 12.2 Anthony provided a brief overview of the Infringement Notice Policy covering the processes involved, and provided some scenarios.
- 12.3 Cr Barry Roderick asked whether offences committed by foreign visitors could be fast tracked as often they had departed NZ before any action could be taken? Anthony advised that this was not an option as the Infringement Notice system still provided offenders with 56 days to settle a fine before further action could be taken, and often they had left the country by then. He said it is possible to post Notices to overseas addresses and should that visitor wish to return to NZ they would be greeted with an outstanding fine if they had failed to pay previously, or if a person had been facing prosecution and had failed to appear, they could in some circumstances be issued with a warrant to arrest. He advised this problem was more prolific in the Otago and Southland regions than this region.
- 12.4 Cr Lindsay Lyons thanked Anthony for putting these policies together acknowledging the assistance of Robert Sowman and Jacob Smyth from the NZ Council Office and Southland Region respectively.
- 12.5 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Ken Coombes) that Council receives the draft National Prosecution Policy as submitted. [19/06/12.5]***

## **13.0 NATIONAL INFRINGEMENT NOTICE POLICY**

- 13.1 The National Infringement Notice Policy item had been discussed in conjunction with the National Prosecution Policy and no further discussion was required.
- 13.2 *Agreed (Ngahi Bidois/Alan Baird) that Council receives the Draft National Infringement Notice Policy as submitted. [19/06/13.2]***

## **14.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS**

### **14.1 *Tongariro-Taupo Conservation Board***

No report.

### **14.2 *Bay of Plenty Conservation Board***

No report.

### **14.3 *Department of Conservation***

Dave Conley spoke on behalf of the Department of Conservation fishery team. He said the fishery was in good shape and spoke of the acoustic smelt monitoring work that the Department was also undertaking on Lake Taupo. Early trapping had seen the average size of brown trout increase by 0.5 kg and licence sales were tracking in line with the previous season. Cr Lindsay Lyons queried the resulting harvest after the minimum size had been reduced? Dave advised that surveys had indicated there had been a 20% increase in harvest. Cr Barry Roderick wondered whether they were seeing an early run and Dave advised that it was a bit too early to tell.

- 14.4 Cr Lindsay Lyons asked Dave about the push for trout farming on Lake Rotoaira. Dave advised that there had been quite a bit of misinformation circulating and provided some clarification. It was not the lake owners making the pitch but rather a business development adviser for the Rotoaira Forest Trust which borders the lake. The project was pitched as a land-based reticulation programme on the Forest Trust land. Lindsay queried why they did not propose salmon farming rather than trout? Dave advised that the water temperatures were very warm in summer and the canals were often dry. He said that if it was to occur it could only be land based, connected to a spring, and very small scale. Trout farming raised a number of issues to consider ranging from ecological risks, to poaching and the black market, and biosecurity. Dave confirmed Andy Garrick's question as to whether the Department had submitted to the Select Committee. Cr Ngahi Bidois asked if the perceived issues raised around trout farming could be addressed, was it something worth considering by Fish & Game or DOC? Ngahi commented that he didn't know enough about it to hold a position, and noted also for future reference, that he knows Tiwana Tibble from the Rotoaira Forest Trust and therefore may have a conflict of interest in relation to this topic.
- 14.5 Cr Barry Roderick asked how many staff are employed by the Department for the Taupo Fishery. Dave advised 14 FTEs which included 18 part timers.

#### **14.6 *New Zealand Fish and Game Council***

Cr Lindsay Lyons' report featured the following:

- Policy Advisor Jack Kos to replace Robert Sowman when he retires in November
- Communications Manager Brian Anderton replaces Don Rood who retired earlier this year
- Resolving issues between CEO/regions
- Six new Councillors on the NZC which is working well together
- Awaiting final report from the Hawke's Bay Council audit
- Consideration of communications language used e.g. weapons versus firearms, hunting versus shooting
- Alternative sources of revenue – donations function now up and running on website
- Bequest and donations policy finalised
- No change to allowance made for black powder guns to use lead
- Fish & Game Chairs meeting to be repeated 23 November 2019
- Firearms law review
- Meeting Minister of Conservation next week.

#### **15.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS**

- 15.1 Due to time constraints there was no discussion of the Operational Reports.
- 15.2 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Laurance Tamati) that Council receives the Management and Health and Safety reports. [19/06/15.2]*
- 15.3 *Agreed (Ken Coombes/Ngahi Bidois) that Council receives the Finance Report and approves payments for March and April 2019 totalling \$287,731.26. [19/06/15.3]*
- 15.4 Council also received the Licence Sales report.

#### **16.0 GENERAL BUSINESS**

- 16.1 Cr Alan Baird asked if there had been any further feedback regarding Upland Game Properties? Andy Garrick advised that this Council's feedback was submitted to the

- NZC in March and that no further advice or feedback had been received. Cr Lindsay Lyons advised that the New Zealand Council had nothing to report on the matter yet.
- 16.2 Cr Alan Baird also queried the possibility of having grey teal added to the game bird schedule as he was aware that there were good numbers of them in his local area. Cr Lindsay Lyons advised that this had been considered previously and had gone through public consultation and to the Minister, but the result was no change to the schedule.
- 16.3 Cr Barry Roderick wanted to know the percentage of birds' hunters were recovering as he had seen a number dumped on local roads and not being utilised. Andy Garrick said that while we have a code of conduct outlining expectations sadly you cannot change some people's behaviour. Matt McDougall had estimated from hunter surveys that around 5% were not recovered but this was not entirely accurate as often other hunters will pick them up.
- 16.4 Cr Barry Roderick queried the use of grass carp in waterways to control vegetation and commented that Dr Alistair Suren from BOPRC had been advocating for it. Eben Herbert said he had observed one canal in which all vegetation had been removed in it when grass carp were present and he never recorded ducklings in it. Andy Garrick advised that he was aware that the Bay of Plenty Regional Council was putting together a lowland drains task force to look at the values of these areas and how they should be managed, and hoped that Fish & Game would be invited to be part of that. He commented that the use of grass carp in drains needed to be more thoroughly researched before we could provide a qualified position on it. Eben Herbert said that Fish & Game would be concerned about widespread and intensive use of grass carp and its effects on mallard productivity.
- 16.5 Cr Lindsay Lyons commented on the plastic wads and cartridge shells ending up in the environment, and asked that this Council write to the New Zealand Council to get a discussion going around this. Andy Garrick advised that staff had investigated alternative options previously, but at that time there were not really any viable alternatives. Eben Herbert, who had investigated earlier, suggested that it would be worth revisiting as things had come a long way since then. John Meikle suggested that Fish & Game could put more effort into promoting hunters picking up after themselves and staff agreed that this should be the first step towards changing hunters' behaviours. Problems with monofilament line and packets were also identified at popular fishing spots.
- 16.6 It was agreed that the catfish item should be postponed for now and put up as a future agenda item.

**17.0 MEETING CLOSED**

17.1 Closing karakia by Cr Ngahi Bidois.

17.2 The meeting was closed at 3.25.



.....  
**Murray Ferris**  
**Chairman**



## SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

- 2.0 APOLOGIES**  
**2.2** *Agreed (Alan Baird/Ken Coombes) that the apologies for the 176<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [19/06/2.2]*
- 3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (11 APRIL 2019)**  
**3.1** *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Ngahi Bidois) that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2019 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [19/06/3.1]*
- 4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY**  
**4.1** *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Laurance Tamati) that Item 11.6 relating to an increase in the proposed donation for the children's fishing programme be included in Council policy. [19/06/4.1]*
- 8.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2019 – 2020 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN**  
**8.3** *Agreed (Alan/Baird/Lindsay Lyons) that Council receives the latest 2019-20 draft Budget and Operational Work Plan and approves that it be circulated to clubs and interested parties for comment. [19/06/8.3]*
- 9.0 2019-2020 LICENCE FEES**  
**9.9** *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Ken Coombes) that Council requests Andy Garrick write to the New Zealand Council advising its concern over this year's licence fee consultation process and requests that in future this be timed to allow Council to discuss this annual statutory obligation at their scheduled Council meeting. [19/06/9.9]*
- 10.0 SPORTS FISHING REGULATIONS**  
**10.2** *Agreed (Laurance Tamati/Alan Baird) that Council agrees the status quo should apply for the 2019-2020 Anglers Notice. [19/06/10.2]*
- 12.0 NATIONAL PROSECUTION POLICY**  
**12.5** *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Ken Coombes) that Council receives the draft National Prosecution Policy as submitted. [19/06/12.5]*
- 13.0 NATIONAL INFRINGEMENT NOTICE POLICY**  
**13.2** *Agreed (Ngahi Bidois/Alan Baird) that Council receives the Draft National Infringement Notice Policy as submitted. [19/06/13.2]*
- 15.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS**  
**15.2** *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Laurance Tamati) that Council receives the Management and Health and Safety reports. [19/06/15.2]*  
**15.3** *Agreed (Ken Coombes/Ngahi Bidois) that Council receives the Finance Report and approves payments for March and April 2019 totalling \$287,731.26. [19/06/15.3]*