

## **WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2014 AT 3.00PM AT HUTT COSMOPOLITAN CLUB, LOGAN STREET, UPPER HUTT**

**1. Present:**

Chairman Martin Taylor, Councillors Simon Muckley, Andy Tannock, Andrew Morris, Jim Cook, Chris O'Meara, Brad Johnson,

**2. In Attendance:**

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Steve Pilkington, Nic Cudby, Corina Jordan

NZ Council Staff: Robert Sowman (Policy and Planning Manager)

Licenceholders: Mark Flaws

**3. Apologies:**

Councillors Richard Moore, Strato Cotsilinis, Mark Grace, Eric Neumann

**It was then moved that:**

*the apologies be accepted.*

**Chris O'Meara/Simon Muckley**

Carried

**4. Conflicts of Interest**

A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of Interest. There was no additional declaration of Conflicts of Interests declared.

**5. Minutes of Previous Meeting of 10 December 2013:**

After a brief discussion it was moved that:

*the Minutes of the last meeting of the previous Wellington Fish & Game Council of 10 December 2013 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.*

**Jim Cook/Andrew Morris**

Carried

**6. Matters Arising**

No matters arising.

7. **NZ Council Business**

Councillor Morris informed that there had not been a NZ Council meeting held since the Wellington Fish & Game Council meeting held in December 2013 on which to report.

Councillor Morris informed that a NZ Council scoping paper for a financial review had been prepared which was being coordinated by Mathew Hall (CSI NZC appointee). It was suggested Councillor Morris be requested for a copy of that paper so that can be distributed to Wellington Councillors for their information.

8. **Draft Game Season Regulations:**

Staff gave a brief commentary of the results of the January trend counts for those species where game season regulation recommendations were pending following their completion. Mr Teal informed Council that the game season recommendations that reflected directions discussed at the December Wellington Fish & Game Council meeting were forwarded to the Minister via NZ Council staff, following an email confirmation of Wellington Councillors in an email on 3 February 2014.

This included:

- o black swan limit of 2 birds per day for 8 week season, and 3 birds per day for Queen's Birthday Weekend – as per Regulation Setting Policy.
- o paradise shelduck a ten week and ten bird limit were recommended as per Council discussions in December Wellington Fish & Game Council meeting.

There was no further quantitative information that would cause material changes to Council recommendations at the December Wellington Fish & Game Council meeting.

It was then moved that

*The game season recommendations sent to the Minister be confirmed as Council's recommendations.*

**Andrew Morris/Chris O'Meara**

Carried

9. **Licence Category Review and Pricing:**

A discussion on the merits of a review of licence categories and pricing was undertaken based on a paper from Ian Hadland (Project Co-ordinator) and Robert Sowman (Policy and Planning Manager, NZ Council) dated November 2013 New Licence Categories and Pricing, and a letter from Robert Sowman dated 7 January 2014 on behalf of NZ Council for consultation on these matters.

Chairman Taylor invited Mr Sowman to provide an overview of the process to date. Mr Sowman explained that it had been some 10 years since a last review of licence categories where it was decided to rationalize the number of categories into Wholeseason, Winter Season, 24hour, and Family (including age cohorts). During this period there had also been debates in parallel on guides licencing and non-resident licence options. NZ Council decided that rather than deal with categories on an adhoc basis that a more comprehensive informed review would occur, and research was subsequently commissioned on that basis. The modeling of different category options was conducted using the most popular new licence categories – with it recognised that if specific options are not pursued then the modeling becomes less robust. Mr Sowman considered that overall it was estimated that the changes in licence category options proposed would make a positive impact on overall licence sales.

Chairman Taylor inquired about the assumptions made in the modeling and specifically the ability of the customer to shift between categories or to bring new customers in as new licenceholders, which could potentially invalidate the model. Mr Sowman in responded to a question by Chairman Taylor that the percentage change in licence sales increase was sufficiently positive to recommend proceeding. He further clarified that some customers may shift from Adult Wholeseason to other categories. He confirmed that if there were misgivings about the model then won't be convinced by its results. Mr Sowman noted that Council had to satisfied that the need for additional categories would satisfy a demand.

Councillor Tannock questioned the perceived demand noting that the changes to a New Zealand wide licence in the past was seen as a progressive step and returning to a regional option was a retrograde step. This was affirmed by Councillor Cook. He also considered this could cause potential internal conflicts of how to apportion spending based on regional licence sales focus.

Councillor Tannock also queried the demand for a dual licence in that the decision to hunt and fish would not be based on a dual licence being available. Councillor Johnson considered that there would be a high risk of cannibalism of sales for that option and Councillor Muckley also considered that the decision making of itinerant and casual hunters was most likely made just prior to the season.

Councillor Tannock also noted that some of the valued added advice an education from retailers may be lost if foot traffic declined due to multi-year category option.

Brief discussion occurred on the “gold card” licence option and potential discounting option, with it noted that the loyalty argument may not be valid as

each year the customer is paying for a service that is delivered for that particular year.

The issues of pricing in terms of cost shifts of prepaid season licences was also discussed with Mr Sowman confirming a percentage of Wholeseason Licence of approximately 85%. Councillor Muckley also questioned whether the licence pricing options for senior loyalty would apply to both Fishing and Hunting category options.

After further discussions the recommendations on noted (bullet point 7) on the Hadland/Sowman discussion paper were considered.

It was then moved that

*The Fish & Game Council agree with the proposed new fishing category definitions and fee structures*

**Martin Taylor/Andrew Morris**

Lost

*The Fish & Game Council agree the proposed licence categories be confirmed by the NZ Council and recommended to the Minister of Conservation for introduction commencing with the 2014 fishing season*

**Martin Taylor/Andrew Morris**

Lost

It was clarified that Wellington Fish & Game Council did not support the recommendations namely:

- (a) agree with the proposed new fishing category definitions and fee structures [**not supported**]
- (b) agree the proposed licence categories be confirmed by the NZ Council and recommended to the Minister of Conservation for introduction commencing with the 2014 fishing season [**not supported**].

**10. Proposed Transition to the Use of Non-Toxic Shot in ‘Sub-gauge’ shotguns:**

A discussion on the merits of a proposed transition to using non-toxic shot in sub-gauge shotguns was undertaken based on a letter from Robert Sowman (Policy and Planning Manager, NZ Council) dated 7 January 2014 relating to that subject. Councillor Tannock considered that any decisions on such a proposed transition should be factually based on use of sub-gauge ammunition rather than phone or ranger surveys. He further noted that no major manufacturers were offering reasonable priced ammunition for the NZ market. He undertook to send a letter to importers and distributors and seek feedback by May 2014 to determine how much ammunition for sub-gauge is sold in New Zealand, and whether there was access to steel shot sub-gauge at reasonable prices.

It was further discussed that there were more significant issues of non-compliance and confusion generated by use of lead shot over water for Canada geese.

It was also considered that there would be merit in an assessment on the potential effect of recruitment given that new entrants often use 20 gauge shotguns.

It was agreed that Wellington Fish & Game Council already had a position of allowing an exemption to the use of non-toxic shot in sub-gauge shotguns. Wellington Fish & Game Council therefore did not support the proposed transition as specified in the attachment to the letter from Robert Sowman dated 7 January 2014.

**11. Draft Prosecution Policy for Fish & Game New Zealand**

A discussion on the draft Prosecution Policy for Fish & Game NZ, including reparation was discussed based on a letter from Robert Sowman (Policy and Planning Manager, NZ Council) dated 7 January 2014 relating to that subject. It was recognised that this would provide the basis for national policy formation which Wellington Fish & Game Council would follow. It was agreed that the principles and guidelines outlined that regional Fish & Game Councils would follow seemed reasonable and logical. It was agreed that Wellington Fish & Game Council would respond to NZ Council's consultation by recording no disagreement with the proposed policy.

It was agreed that Wellington Fish & Game Council would seek copies of existing legal advice obtained by Southland Fish & Game Council and NZ Council on the operation of reparation schemes.

**12. One Plan Update:**

Mr Teal gave an overview of the background regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that has been drafted between F&G, Horizons Regional Council, and Federated Farmers.

**13. Mallard Research Update:**

Mr Teal gave an update of progress on the five research projects being undertaken by NZF&GC. The advertisement and selection of a PhD candidate has been a significant step forward in project relating to the mallard productivity model development.

Councillor Tannock gave a brief overview of results of predator interactions from 2013 season study which gave cause for concern which indicated that nest disturbance and duckling survival had been affected by a range of predators. It had been postulated by the researchers that the hens may have been nesting in habitats that were more vulnerable to predators or that they were in margins of habitat which were also thoroughfares for predators.

**14. Trout Reservoir Options Update:**

Nic Cudby gave a brief update and overview of options for establishing new sites, or supporting and developing existing sites used as a trout fishing resource. It was confirmed that focus would be provided for two sites; Centennial Lagoon and Avalon Boat pond with a temperature logger being used in the latter site to assess suitability.

**15. Junior Novice Participation Update:**

Nic Cudby gave an overview of the recent efforts in establishing contacts with schools and other similar outdoor programmes that could be supported; namely Pohangina Valley School (tentatively assigned a teacher and aquarium), and Glen Beech who was organising an outdoor education programme for six schools.

**16. Lake Wairarapa Update:**

Mr Cudby gave an overview of work being planned or undertaken on Yules Lagoon for re-opening the diversion channel as a water supply, and ensuring a shallow bund of less than 30cm at the lower end of the site. Mr Cudby confirmed that there were no consents required from Regional Council to undertake the works.

After discussion it was agreed that the novice positions at Yules Lagoon be available for junior hunters over the course of the season and there would be a booking system established to manage this.

Mr Cudby gave an overview of the work planned for JK Donald Wetland. Following discussions with Regional Council and DoC he indicated that a second weir was still being contemplated downstream on the Otakura Stream, and considered that there was an opportunity to work more collaboratively in achieving similar goals. He also noted that Kim Broad (GWRC) and Tony Silbery (DoC) had been working with him on defining a spraying programme for the area focusing on water courses and around Big and Tent lagoons. Nic Cudby confirmed to Councillors Tannock and Morris that the weir boards had been put in place on 18 February 2014 to investigate how long the area took to fill up (regional council investigation) and that he was check the drain for blockages on 19 February.

Nic Cudby confirmed that he had been involved in the fish removal project at Barton's Lagoon with "set nets" over three nights catching only a few perch, 50+ rudd, and up to 20 brown trout. He also confirmed several hundred eels were caught in fyke nets.

It was agreed to retrieve copies of all the minutes of the Wairarapa Moana Governance meetings to date.

17. **Management Report 1 December 2013 – 31 January 2014:**

Mr Teal provided brief comment on:

- o Bartons Lagoon fish removal study
- o Collaborative project with Cawthron Institute
- o Zone committee selection for Ruamanahga catchment
- o Goose cull recently undertaken by local farmers on Lake Wairarapa

After discussion it was moved that

*The management report for 1 December 2013 – 31 January 2014 be received.*

**Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara**

Carried

18. **Licence Sales Report to 7 February 2014**

After brief discussion it was moved that

*The Fish Licence Sales and Game Licence Sales reports as at 7 February 2014 be received.*

**Andrew Morris/Jim Cook**

Carried

Mr Sowman left the meeting at 5.00pm

19. **Expenditure Report**

After discussion it was moved that

*the Expenditure Report for 31 December 2013 and Financial Transactions for November and December 2013 be approved*

**Jim Cook/Andrew Morris**

Carried

20. **Correspondence**

Brief discussion ensued on correspondence and media including the high level of public awareness obtained for the paradise shelduck special season in February.

It was then moved that

*Correspondence and Media reports for January be received*

**Chris O'Meara/Andy Tannock**

Carried

21. **General Business**

Mr Teal briefly noted that Otago Fish & Game Council had sent a copy of draft Sports Fish & Game Management Plan for consultation. Corina Jordan noted that one potential issue in how they classified the fisheries as nationally, regionally, or locally important may have implications in terms of application of National Policy Statement Freshwater.

Mr Teal brought to Council's attention that a shotgun patterning sheet had been drafted and was proposed that a sample copy be inserted in each Fish & Game Magazine Special Issue (at each region's cost). It was agreed that due to the late notice given regarding the project that samples would be given to agents as the principal distribution source.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 5.25pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Coachman Motor Lodge, Palmerston North 8 April 2014 at 3.00pm

Chairman\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_