



AGENDA

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

8th June 2024

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held at the Waikato Deer Stalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton on Saturday 8 June 2024 commencing at 11.0 a.m.

AGENDA

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N Juby
Chairman

23/05/2024

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton
on Saturday 27th April 2024 commencing at 11:00am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: N. Juby.
Councillors: E. Williamson, D. Cocks, P. Shaw, C. Sherrard, M. Barker,
B. Barnes, T. Clark, G. Annan.
Staff: D. Klee, J, A. Daniel.
Visitors: P. Hardy (DOC) XXXX

1. APOLOGIES:

G. Dickey

It was moved;

that apologies be accepted.

Annan/Cocks – CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

Nil.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF 9th December 2023:

Councillor Williamson discussed the Piggott wetland management plan noting live capture traps and poison are allowed on other wetlands. Councillor Cocks confirmed that the changes to the management plan suggested by council were accepted. The chair clarified budgeting process and contestable funding bids noting that previous council meeting had been rescheduled due to staff and councillor availability.

Subsequently it was moved;

Not to submit a contestable funding bid and approve the 24/25 budget.

Annan/Barker – CARRIED

It was moved;

That the minutes of the previous meeting of 24th February 2024 meeting be accepted as true and correct records:

Barker/Shaw – CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Nil.

5. INWARDS COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Letter to the Minister: The Chair gave a verbal update on this process and copies of the letter and draft response were tabled. Discussion around the draft letter with some useful feedback presented. The Chair requested that any further feedback be given to him so it could be considered noting that the letter needed to be dispatched the following day (April 28). Council suggested that issues of 4.10, Whakapapa access and the state of the lower waikato lakes and wetlands were also included.

Letter to NZ Council regarding Levy payment: Councillor Cocks felt that the NZ Council representatives had not actually answered our previous request appropriately. Councillors expressed disappointment at the fact NZ Council was unwilling to engage in arbitration and reach a mutually acceptable position. The Chair explained that given this situation there was probably no point taking this issue any further. He explained that even though we are the only region that are up on licence sales this year it is unlikely that we will achieve our budget due to the inflated sales target and given the low level of our reserves we may now require a bailout from NZ Council through no fault of our own.

It was moved;

That the incoming correspondence be accepted as true and correct records:

Cocks/Barker – CARRIED

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

Staff update: The Chair suggested it may be prudent to give councillors an update on staff recruitment now that both new staff had signed contracts. The CE expressed excitement at having some new skilled enthusiastic staff starting shortly. He explained that the two candidates appeared to complement each other's skill sets well.

Mangatutu earthworks: Councillor Williamson questioned WRC's lack of action to the earthworks conducted adjacent to the Mangatutu stream. Adam responded that it was a major piece of work and was disappointed that he had not received a response to date. Adam will follow up again.

Banding analysis: Councillor Barker asked about information from banding data and noted a recent report from Australia with helpful information for regulations. CE stated he had not read the report but would appreciate a copy. Also, new staff member Beau Jarvis-Child will be assigned to work with Matt McDougall from the Eastern region and

prepare a report for council. It is hoped that all North Island regions will adopt a cohesive banding programme with Northland potentially coming on board in 2025.

Arapuni trout competition: Councillor Annan gave an update of the competition. Some excellent fish landed; most large fish got caught near the top under the dam. Around 50% of the fish were wild. Adam will be preparing a report for the next council meeting.

Whangamarino Weir: CE gave an update on S128. Latest information from WRC is that they agree it can be non-notified providing provision to raise the weir to 3.14 RL removed from the consent. The weir has never been put at that height (current design level is 2.95 RL) and it was only a provision in the consent which required a further assessment regardless. The CE suggested that it was in no one's best interest to try and litigate this now, given the weir comes up for re consenting in just a few years anyway.

It was moved;

That the council sends a letter and gift to Ben and John thanking them for their services:

Cocks/Barker – CARRIED

It was moved;

that the Chief Executive's Bimonthly Report and Financial Statements be accepted.

Cocks/Annan – CARRIED

7. NATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY FOR RANGERS:

Page 34 – “She” should be changed to “they”.

Concerns were raised around the requirements to implement policies 1 – 9 especially for honorary rangers. For example, first aid requirements. Is it envisaged that every honorary ranger will have to go through first aid training and if so has that been budgeted for noting that in our region we have around 15 honorary rangers. It was also unclear what level of detail will be required to comply with reporting conditions back to the National office. Concern was expressed that requiring the NZC CEO to understand and sign off 13 different plans was inefficient and unworkable - a template issued by NZC which allowed for regional variation would make everyone's jobs easier.

It was moved;

The CE to seek further clarification what will be required under policies 1-9 and request a reporting template to better understand what is being asked of regional councils.

Cocks/Annan – CARRIED

8. DRAFT NATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY:

Discussion on health and safety plans, the Chairman indicated that there will need to be some changes in how we operate. CE confirmed we have an active Health & safety plan, which may need to be updated based on recent national policy.

It was moved;

That CE has the authorisation to respond and seek further explanations on all national policies.

Cocks/Sherrard – CARRIED

9. DRAFT PROTECTED DISCLOSURE POLICY:

No issues raised on this document.

10. RESEARCH FUND APPLICATION:

External funding

The Chair questioned whether there is a general overreliance on the research fund to pay for entire projects. The form should include an accurate breakdown of what funding sources have been investigated, applications lodged and what the outcomes were. This would allow a much better evaluation of the value of research projects.

Councillor Barnes explained a need to update the research process as previous projects had variable results.

The CE explained that concerns were raised at the last managers meeting about funding for projects e.g. Engaging with Mana Whenua which stemmed from the F&G review and insight work related to the F&G manifesto. The managers had recommended that this should not come from the research fund as it did not appear to fit the criteria, but this occurred regardless. Councillor Barnes explained that this was before his time and is exactly why there is a need to update the application process. Council discussed the need for better dissemination of research projects and held in a central repository to make available to licence holders and publish results.

11. NZC CEO UPDATE TO REGIONAL MANAGERS:

Budget setting and contestable funding, discussion around the process and it was noted that only half of the regions made the requested 3% budget savings. The Chair indicated that we were the only region that made the 3% saving and did not put in a contestable funding bid but that we were only able to do this because of staff changes. It was noted that Taranaki/Wellington did not make any budget savings despite the voluntary amalgamation and that it would be interesting to see what savings will be made in future years. Councillor Barnes indicated that the contestable funding process as it currently stands will be changed next year as it was not viewed as a constructive process.

12. WHAKAPAPA INTAKE ROAD CLOSURE:

Dr Daniel gave a brief history of the access issues and future prognosis for getting it re-established. It appears that all avenues to find an acceptable outcome with the new landowners has been exhausted and the matter has been elevated to the minister of hunting and fishing.

13. .410 NON TOXIC SHOT PAPER:

Discussion around how the regulation came into effect, CE raised concerns about availability of non-toxic and lack of communications being put out to our hunters through our communications team. The CE confirmed that he will be purchasing some non-toxic .410 bismuth if it can be sourced to take ranging on opening weekend. Any children found with lead shot will be given some nontoxic alternatives to use to ensure they can remain compliant.

Councillor Barnes suggested that everyone that any of our hunters who have concerns should write to the minister and seek that the exemption for .410 lead shot be reinstated.

14. OSH REPORT:

Update on recent incident involving Fish & Game vehicle that was driven into the Emmett wetland. It appears this vehicle may be written off, but we are yet to receive confirmation. CE gave an update on the defibrillator purchase stating that he is investigating new light portable options which are well priced, but wants to ensure they are also effective.

It was moved;
that the OSH report is accepted.

Annan/Cocks – CARRIED

15. GENERAL BUSINESS:

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 3.00pm.

The next meeting of Council is scheduled for 8th of June 2024.

17 May 2024

The Chairman,
Fish & Game NZ, Auckland/Waikato
156 Brymer Road,
RD 9, Hamilton 3289

Dear Sir/Madam,

Fishing Access to South Waikato Streams

I am a long-time fishing license holder formerly from Southland, now resident in Auckland. For a long time I have been searching for good trout fishing close to Auckland. I find that, although many good rivers are out there, public access to them has become very poor.

The various Fish and Game trout fishing brochures (available from some sports shops & Information Centres) offered hope. However, when I visited the areas described in the brochures I found that the written descriptions bear little resemblance to what is now on the ground. The brochures appear to be years out of date, and the same text is reproduced on the Fish & Game website.

For example, the section on the Waiomou Stream (from the South Waikato Spring Creeks brochure) describes a public fishing reserve 5 km upstream and 3 km downstream from Waiomou Road. However, there is no signage anywhere to indicate that these reserves exist. The only visible signs declare the adjacent farmland to be a Health and Safety hazard area, with access prohibited to all but authorised farm staff.

There seem to be none of the blue 'Angler's Access' signs anywhere in the district. While a few Angler's Access points do exist on paper (e.g. as shown on the Outdoor Access Commission's on-line maps) they are not physically signposted and appear to be long-forgotten.

I have nonetheless found some very good water in the South Waikato, and have tried to contact local farmers to ask permission to cross their land for access. But I have encountered a new obstacle in the form of Health & Safety laws and the risk aversion that goes with them.

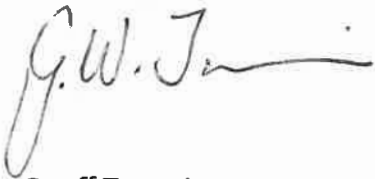
Previous legal verdicts had made it very clear that fishing access would not be threatened by Health and Safety laws. However, the issue seems to have since taken on a downhill life of its own and I believe that angler's rights are not being protected as intended. When asked for permission to cross their land, some farmers or their managers are saying no on Health & Safety grounds.

I am writing to request two things from Fish and Game NZ:

1. That the pre-eminence of angler's access over Health & Safety law is clearly and regularly restated and widely publicised.
2. That Fish and Game (Auckland/Waikato) begin negotiating for and creating new Angler's Access points to some of the best waters in the Auckland/Waikato district, and rehabilitating and re-signing existing ones. These should also include safe car parking, stiles, and reasonable foot access.

I pay a large (and always increasing) fishing license fee to Fish & Game NZ, but do not see much benefit in return in the Auckland/Waikato districts where I now do most of my fishing. Despite the excellent waters available, fewer and fewer fishermen appear to be still using them.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G.W. Tremain', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Geoff Tremain

166 Luckens Road, West Harbour, Auckland.

Email: geoff.tremain@gmail.com

Ph: 021 0297 4034

CONSULTATION:	LICENCE FEE RECOMMENDATION 2024-25
TO:	Regional Chairs
CC:	Regional Managers, NZC and Administrators
AUTHOR:	Corina Jordan, CEO NZ Fish and Game Council
DATE:	29/04/2024
FEEDBACK DUE:	31/05/2024
FEEDBACK TO:	nzcouncil@fishandgame.org.nz
LINK TO REGISTER:	Consultation Register

Recommendations - Ngā taunaki

The New Zealand Fish and Game Council seeks consultation from Regional Fish and Game Councils on the following points:

1. That the 2024/25 adult whole season sports fish licence fee is set at \$153 and that the adult whole season game licence is set at \$113 (inclusive of a \$5 fee for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp), with all proportional changes to remaining licence fees and categories. (no change from 2023/24).
2. The sea run salmon licence endorsement of \$5 (as a cost-recovery mechanism). (no change from 2023/24).
3. That Designated Waters Licence, as a \$5 annual licence per Fish and Game region for resident anglers and as a day licence to non-resident anglers at a fee of \$40. (no change from 2023/24).

Discussion - Kōrero

Proposal

The New Zealand Fish and Game Council (NZC) is seeking to consult with Fish and Game regional councils on the '2024/25 licence fee recommendations and forecast LEQ' for 2024/25.

The NZC met on the 19th and 20th of April 2024 to consider the 2024/25 budgets and licence fees. Following that meeting, NZC agreed to recommend maintaining the licence fee for a sports fish adult whole season licence at \$153 and to maintain the game adult whole season licence at \$113 for 2024/2025. In recommending these fees, NZC also recommended that all other licence categories increase to the agreed proportions. A full list of recommended licence fees and categories is detailed in the Schedule attached (**Appendix 2**).

Background

Legislation provides for the following:

- Section 26Q of the Conservation Act 1987 sets out the functions of Fish and Game Councils.
- **Subsection (l)(d)(a) requires councils:** *To assess the costs attributable to the management of sports fish and game;*
- **Section 26Q(l)(d)(ii) requires Fish and Game councils:** *To develop and recommend to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council appropriate licence fees to recover costs and game bird habitat stamp fees;*
- **Section 26C(l)(e) requires NZC:** *To recommend to the Minister of Conservation an appropriate fee for fishing and hunting licenses, after considering the views and recommendations of Fish and Game Councils;*
- **Section 26C(l)(ia) also requires NZC:** *To recommend to the Minister, after considering the views and recommendations (if any) of Fish and Game Councils and the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust Board, an appropriate fee in respect of any game bird habitat stamp and the form of such stamps (the form of the stamp to be approved as part of the 2011 Game Notice).*

Operationally, the national policy of NZC specifies that all expenditure needs to be approved as part of the budget round, including capital expenditure and expenditure from reserves for all councils.

Policy

At the May 2020 NZC meeting, in response to COVID-19, the NZC set the minimum level of reserves at 20% of total budget for all councils. This level of general reserve is considered adequate to provide security against fluctuations in income and to ensure adequate operational cash flow.

The budget policy specifies that all expenditure from general and dedicated reserves needs to be notified/approved by NZC as part of the budget round, or by making an application for Exceptional Funding. There are consequences across all sectors of the organisation when any council's reserves are reduced in a manner inconsistent with this policy.

Budget Process

The method of increasing funding levels for individual councils is through a contestable funding application at the April budget setting meeting. Applications can be for either a one-off funding allocation for a specific project, or for ongoing additional funding. The latter in effect raises the total baseline funding level for that council.

The funding required to cover base funds and approved contestable funding is assessed against the expected licence sales for the year ahead (established from analysis of the last two-year sales trends, considering the implications of COVID-19 and border restrictions) to determine the licence fees.

This process is summarised in the following budget cycle:

Feb	<p>All council budgets reviewed against audited actual expenditure. Budgets over or under 10% variance are reported against, reviewed, and discussed. The variance reports for the 2022/23 year are prepared and discussed.</p> <p>NZC set regional base funds for the 2024/25 year at \$11,867,408. NZC recommended to all Regions to make reductions of 3% from their Base funds.</p>
March	<p>Preparation of business and operational work plans for new financial year (NFY).</p> <p>Draft budgets developed by NZC and regional councils.</p> <p>Regions and NZC made savings of \$192,183.</p>
April	<p>Councils apply for 'new' contestable funding with applications circulated beforehand, reviewed against criteria, considered, and prioritised at the meeting</p>
	<p>NZC meet (by Zoom) with the Chairs of each region to consider the contestable funding applications.</p>
April	<p>NZC make recommendation on licence forecast, fees, having considered base funding levels and contestable fund applications, and send to regional councils for consideration.</p>
May	<p>Regional councils consider NZC licence fee recommendation. Due back to NZC (31 May).</p>
June	<p>NZC consider regional response and finalise licence fee recommendations for approval by the Minister of Conservation. (19 June)</p>

The recommended licence fee is effectively set by dividing the sum of the proposed budgets of the 13 Councils by the number of the adult whole season licence equivalents that Fish and Game NZ expects to sell during the year (LEQ targets).

2024/25 Licence LEQ Forecast

The following table represents the approved forecast for the Licence sales for Fish and Game for the 2024/25 season. Total LEQ Fish 72,826 and Game 31,340.

The forecast which was recommended by the Licence Working Party.

	Actual 2021/22		Actual 2022/23		Est 2024	Budget 2023/24		Projected 24/25	
	Fish	Game	Fish	Game	Fish	Fish	Game	Fish	Game
Northland	217	1,582	455	1,552	454	370	1,552	454	1,537
Auckland\Waikato	3,231	6,309	3,550	6,518	3,658	3,729	6,201	3,658	6,518
Eastern	8,695	3,024	8,643	2,854	8,456	8,663	3,012	8,363	2,769
Hawkes Bay	2,476	1,916	2,525	1,750	2,335	1,879	1,916	2,690	1,667
Taranaki	861	1,114	1,034	1,086	987	938	1,113	964	1,072
Wellington	3,239	3,409	2,990	3,290	2,989	2,807	3,409	2,989	3,231
Nelson-Marlb	3,460	900	4,410	862	4,364	4,599	887	4,341	843
Nth Canterbury	10,980	2,428	11,084	2,557	10,964	11,148	2,381	10,904	2,557
West Coast	1,744	370	2,253	364	2,169	2,208	358	2,127	361
Central SI	11,638	2,235	12,946	2,267	12,536	12,937	2,233	12,331	2,267
Otago	14,923	4,080	15,828	3,989	15,549	15,614	4,029	15,410	3,944
Southland	8,099	4,727	9,084	4,625	8,758	9,167	4,672	8,595	4,574
NZC only									
National									
TOTAL	69,563	32,094	74,802	31,714	73,219	74,060	31,763	72,826	31,340

Following Components Featured in the 2024/25 Budget Discussions:

Contestable Funding Applications

59 contestable funding applications were received (90 last year), seeking additional funding of \$2,200,596 (last year \$2,965,090).

National Budget	# Applications	\$ from Licence fee	\$ from Reserves	CF for Salaries	CF for REM	CF for new Staff
Northland	2	12,974		10,974	10,974	
Auckland\Waikato	0	-	-	-	-	
Eastern	2	26,600	15,000	26,600	26,600	
Hawkes Bay	2	154,000	-	54,000	54,000	
Taranaki	2	29,333	-	29,333	8,124	21,209
Wellington	1	17,788	-	17,788	17,788	
Nelson-Marlb	0	-	-	-	-	
Nth Canterbury	5	103,748	30,000	31,748	31,748	
West Coast	2	34,350	25,000	59,350	59,350	
Central SI	3	237,500	29,601	190,000		190,000
Otago	3	120,000	23,000	115,000		115,000
Southland	5	19,427	136,775	75,702	10,427	65,275
NZC only	7	110,400	-	-		
National	25	1,075,100	-	160,000		160,000
TOTAL	59	1,941,220	259,376	770,495	219,011	551,484
TOTAL Contestable Funding Applications		2,200,596				

Contestable Funding Recommendations from NZC Staff

The NZC staff made recommendations to the NZC in 3 Steps:

1. Step 1: Prioritisation for Regional Contestable fund applications for salaries and core functions;
2. Step 2: Recommendations for NZC and National Budgets for core functions;
3. Step 3: Recommendation of the Regional Contestable applications and the NZC and

National applications against the Fish & Game Organisational Strategy – strategic merit.

2024/25 NZC Contestable Funding Approval and 2024/25 Budgets

Budgets for all councils were received and circulated to the NZC for review prior to the April NZC meeting.

The Chairs of the Regions were invited to present their CFs to the NZC on Friday 19th April.

The NZC approved contestable funding applications at a total value of \$1,580,496. Of this, \$624,161 were ongoing from the Licence fee, \$596,959 were one off from the Licence fee and \$359,376 were one-off from reserves.

The attached Table 6 (Appendix 1) sets out the full list of approved contestable funding applications with the approval rating from the NZC staff and the final approval from the NZC. Any figures highlighted in yellow have been adjusted from the original application during the Contestable funding review process or at the NZC meeting.

Reasoning behind the decisions include:

1. Salaries for REM – have all been approved in principle – as the NZC believe our people are our greatest assets. However, the amounts sort in the CF's need to peer reviewed by the HR advisor to ensure the amounts are in line with the REM policy i.e. there is parity/ equity across the organisation for staff.
 - a. The process this year is that the market information from the March Strategic Pay survey will be available around mid May. Jane will then notify Chairs/ Managers of the new pay bands and will send out a spreadsheet to those who have asked for CF funds for remuneration. Jane will work with the Chair/ Manager to schedule a meeting to chat through regional recommendations for salaries. Pay parity can then be checked and the additional budget required can be confirmed.
 - b. Once this review has been completed, the relevant Regions will be notified of the final approval from the CF fund for Rem.
 - c. In future, as NZC has only approved a budget for one Strategic Pay report in the next financial year, we will use the September 2024 report to calculate the remuneration budget for the 25/26 financial year.
 - d. Strategic Pay will calculate new pay bands in early December from the September survey , so the HR/HS advisor can then send out a spreadsheet to Regions where you can identify where you think you will want to place your staff within the bands, and the required remuneration can be calculated well before the April NZC meeting.
2. All CF's from Regional reserves were approved.
3. Northland - \$2,000 for insurance was declined as the NZC feels this amount could be found within the present Northland budget, and due to significant organisational fiscal constraints.

4. Hawkes Bay \$100,000 has been approved from reserves as a one off. It is the intention of the HBFGC to ensure this project is self-sustaining in the following years.
5. Taranaki – Management Contract - \$21,209 – Approved as a one off and for the budget to be reconsidered in the following year.
6. North Canterbury – Put and Take Fishery – NZC approved \$5,000 as per the current year budget. The value of the put and take fishery project was noted as high against the Organisational Strategy, though unfortunately further funding could not be provided at this stage due to tight organisational fiscal constraints. Te Waihora Maimai \$9,000 was approved as a one off as the NZC have requested the North Canterbury Council to investigate alternative funding for this, for example a Maimai fee to those using the maimai’s. The ARF figure was approved as per the current year budget \$20,000 (one off) with the NZC requesting all Regions ARF registers are reviewed against ARF policy to ensure all Regions are adequately funded.
7. Central South Island – Applied for 2 staff members – the NZC approved 1 staff member, after considering the regional needs to support the canals fisheries, and level of staffing across similar sized regions. This was the second year CSI had sought an additional field officer to support delivery of their operational plan and in particular to meet the needs of managing the canal fisheries;
8. Otago - \$5,000 for the Council Induction was not approved as this will be funded by the NZC budget. The new staff member was declined due to financial constraints, though as with North Canterbury’s put and take fishery, the strategic value of this position was noted as high against the Organisational Strategy.
9. Southland – CF’s from Reserves approved and the Parrie and swan counts costs were reinstated.
10. NZC - \$20,000 for NZC meetings not approved as they look to move to online and 1-day meetings to save money. Staff expenses reduced to \$10,000 due to financial constraints. Advocacy for Fish and Game \$37,500 was reinstated (as this was originally reduced with the 3% cuts). The NZC were committed to the Governance Advisor and approved \$20,000 for this as part of the commitment to undertake the non-legislative recommendations of the Ministerial Review, and in supporting the organisation through this period of change.
11. National – Many of the National CF applications were due to increased costs for providing core regional services and as such were approved – for example, the increase in office 365 and data costs, election costs, postage increases for the postage of the licences and increased costs of hosting face to face managers meetings.
 - a. The Health and Safety Risk management system was given a priority as the NZC considered that the implementation of a robust H & S system used by all of Fish and Game was vital.
 - b. Approval was given for the Website and Social media project \$30,000 which aims to

design and delivery extension resources for hunters and anglers as part of the commitment to adding value for Licence holders and in underpinning the organisations R³ program – initial focus on recruitment and reactivation.

- c. The NZC Staff submitted a CF for National Liaison (\$40k) and Marketing & Social Licence (80K). The NZC approved a total of \$30,000 across both projects with the direction to the CEO to use this funding either in National Liaison and or Marketing and Social licence. \$90,000 declined due to prioritisation of regional needs within tight fiscal constraints.
- d. The Research budget was reinstated to the \$100k (as this was originally reduced with the 3% cuts)
- e. A reduction in the National Base funding of \$50,000 was approved (this was part of the Regulations budget) to make additional funds available. The NZC made a decision to no longer print regulation guides, but to have these provided as a link and a PDF only.
- f. The \$50,000 reduction from the Regulations budget was approved to be used as a one off for the Scoping of the Digital licence for 2024/25.
- g. The HR/HS position that was funded as a one off in 2023/24 was approved but at .6FTE rather than the .8 FTE that was originally applied for.
- h. Governor Training and induction was approved at \$30,000.
- i. The application for a .5 FTE for research was declined.

12. There were two major projects that were considered by the NZC, that were not affordable within the Licence fee – these 2 projects were for the magazine \$235,000 and for the Regional RMA (Resource Management Act) Fund \$200,000. The NZC recognised the significance of these 2 projects – both have been approved as one offs for 2024/25 and will come from regional reserves.

The proposed budget for the 13 Fish and Game councils for 2024/25 (including funding from reserves) is \$13,255,720. Individual budgets are shown in the Table 3 below alongside the previous financial year (both shown as GST exclusive).

Table 3: National Approved Budget -DRAFT

	Base Funds 2024/25	Approved CF Licence Fee ongoing	Approved CF from Licence Fee - One off	Approved CF from Reserves - One off	Approved Budget 2024/25 (inc from Reserves)
Northland	581,107	10,974	0	0	592,081
AucklandWaikato	881,824	0	0	0	881,824
Eastern	1,278,944	26,600	0	15,000	1,320,544
Hawkes Bay	380,624	54,000	0	100,000	534,624
Taranaki	419,692	8,124	21,209	0	449,025
Wellington	830,600	17,788	0	0	848,388
Nelson-Marlb	564,125	0	0	0	564,125
Nth Canterbury	973,187	36,748	29,000	30,000	1,068,935
West Coast	341,601	34,350	0	25,000	400,951
Central SI	850,235	95,000	23,750	29,601	998,586
Otago	1,240,967	0	0	23,000	1,263,967
Southland	803,632	19,427	0	136,775	959,834
NZC only	1,203,086	77,400	0	0	1,280,486
National 1	1,325,600	243,750	523,000	0	2,092,350
TOTAL	11,675,224	624,161	596,959	359,376	13,255,720

1

Research Fund Allocation

To avoid inflating the budget in any one year an allocation is made annually to the Research Fund. The annual Research Budget (\$155k) has been split between General Research (\$100k), the National Anglers Survey (\$30k) and the Research for PhD (Cawthron \$25k).

The National Research Budget was reduced by \$41,000 (to make the 3% savings) This was reinstated by the NZC within the CF approval process.

There were no applications to this Research Fund.

Staff Development Fund

A staff scholarship of \$10,000 is available annually for Fish and Game staff to apply for support from the organisation for national and international study, work experience or participation in events or conferences.

There were two applications to this fund for the 2024/25 year.

¹ National issues include the cost of shared services benefiting the organisation nationwide, such as the special editions of the FISH AND GAME magazine, the FISH AND GAME NZ website, licence administration system, administration of elections, ranger health & safety training, etc.

1. Hamish Stevens (CSI) \$2,500 – to attend the Biennial Bay Delta Science Conference in San Francisco
2. Beginner te Reo Māori online classes for 20x F & G staff \$6,600 (applied for by Maggie Tait)

Following the recommendations from the Managers, the application from Hamish Stevens was approved to the total value of \$2,500.

RMA/Legal Fund Allocation

The RMA/Legal fund receives budget allocations on a reimbursement basis. It covers payment of costs through a national fund rather than separate funding allocations in individual council's budgets where approved legal projects occur.

It was agreed that contestable funding of \$200,000 be allocated to the national legal pool fund for this 2024/25 year. This will be funded from reserves.

The NZC approved from the RMA fund

- \$10,215 to work on inputs control form the NPSFM (National Policy Statement Freshwater Management) project.
- \$30,000 for Hawkes Bay for Tranche 2.
- \$50,000 towards RMA reform and NPS _ FM.
- And 65,000 from Hawkes Bay Reserves for Tranche 2.

Licence Fee Recommendations

NZC Licence Fee Recommendation

At the February 2024 NZC meeting, the NZC indicated that they intended for the licence fee to remain at \$153 and \$113 as they believed that the minister would, be accepting of this price.

The NZC recommend that the 2024/25 licence fee be based on a sports fish adult whole season fee of \$153 and the game adult whole season licence \$113 (inclusive of the Game Bird Habitat Stamp) (GST inclusive) and for all other licence categories to increase proportionally. The Salmon licence \$5, the Designated Waters Licence \$5 for residents and \$40 for Non-residents. This represents no increase on last year.

The NZC recommended that the Sports Fish and Game licence categories be maintained at the same ratios as previous years.

Recommended licence fees are set out in the schedule 2 at the end of this letter.

Total income including interest is \$12,463,441. The Cost of Sales (COS) is the commission and bank transaction charges relating to the sale of licences is budgeted at 4.0% of licence income.

Table 4: Total Income Summary 2024/25

	TOTAL Licence Income \$		Net Licence		
	TOTAL F & G	Total COS \$	Income \$	Interest \$	Net Income
Northland	204,746	8,190	196,556	10,104	206,660
Auckland\Waikato	1,098,798	43,952	1,054,846	17,768	1,072,615
Eastern	1,372,688	54,908	1,317,780	34,340	1,352,120
Hawkes Bay	514,440	20,578	493,862	35,630	529,492
Taranaki	228,929	9,157	219,772	9,032	228,804
Wellington	701,100	28,044	673,056	10,984	684,040
Nelson-Marlb	656,710	26,268	630,442	7,419	637,861
Nth Canterbury	1,690,842	67,634	1,623,208	13,367	1,636,575
West Coast	316,886	12,675	304,211	15,470	319,681
Central SI	1,853,460	74,138	1,779,322	44,444	1,823,766
Otago	2,420,593	96,824	2,323,769	57,966	2,381,735
Southland	1,573,067	62,923	1,510,144	39,923	1,550,068
NZC only				40,025	40,025
National					
TOTAL	12,632,259	505,290	12,126,969	336,472	12,463,441

NZ Game Bird Habitat Stamp

The NZC recommended the Game Bird Habitat Stamp for 2023/24 remain at \$5.

Modification to Licence Categories and Ratios with whole Season Fees

The NZ Council agreed that the sports fish categories and ratios be maintained the same as previous years.

Overall Forecast Position and Use of Reserves

The recommendation for licence fee of \$153 and \$113, along with the recommendation of a total budget of \$13,255,720 creates an overall deficit of \$792,279.

Table 5: Overall Forecast Position for Fish and Game

For the Year ended 31 August 2025

Net Licence Sales				12,126,969
Interest				336,472
Total Income				12,463,441
Less Approved Budget				13,255,720
Total Surplus/(Deficit)				(792,279)

Approval for regions to use their reserves to cover one off projects for the year totals \$359,376. Additionally, regions are required to use their reserves to cover the shortfall of \$432,903. This latter amount represents an additional 3.36% use of reserves. (\$359,376 plus \$432,903 equals the total

deficit of \$792,279).

Forecasts as at April 2024 suggest one region, North Canterbury may fall below the 20% reserves and require a top up of \$12,247 in the 2025/26 contestable funding round. This forecast however, is based on Regions working within the 2023/24 budgets.

Conclusion

The NZ Council seeks consultation from Fish and Game regional councils on the following points:

1. **The licence fees and categories as set out in the appended schedule (Appendix 2) and specifically:**
 - a. **That the 2024/25 adult whole season sports fish licence fee is set at \$153 and that the adult whole season game licence is set at \$113 (inclusive of a \$5 fee for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp), with all proportional changes to remaining licence fees**
 - b. **The Licence LEQ of 72,826 (Fish) and 31,340 (Game)**

To enable the NZC to consider feedback and make recommendations to the Minister of Conservation at its 18 June 2023 meeting, responses to these changes are requested to be submitted by the close of business on **31 May 2024**.



Barrie Barnes
Chairman
New Zealand Fish and Game Council



Corina Jordan
Chief Executive
New Zealand Fish and Game Council

APPENDIX 1

Table 6 : Contestable Fund Applications Detail 2024-25 - 432,903																								
Summary of Decisions from NZC meeting																								
App No	Region Base Funding 2024/25	Project Code	Description	L	R	B	O	C	Additional \$ Sought	\$ amount \$ Adjusted	Staff Recommendation	NZC Recommendation	1 Not	2 Good To	3 Recommend	4 Essential Whole	5 Withdrawn	APPROVED Ongoing Licence Fee	APPROVED One Off Licence Fee	APPROVED Restore Reserves	APPROVED Capital EX	APPROVED from Reserves		
	Northland																							
	\$ 581,107																							
NTH 001		1910	Salaries	L		B			10,974	10,974	4	4							10,974					
NTH 002		1984	Insurance	L		B			2,000	2,000	1	1	2,000											
	TOTAL Northland								12,974	12,974			2,000						10,974					
	Auckland/Waikato																							
	\$ 881,824		No CF bids						0	0														
	TOTAL Auckland/Waikato								0	0														
	Eastern																							
	\$ 1,278,944								0	0														
EAST 001		1910	Salaries	L		B			26,600	26,600	4	4							26,600					
EAST 002		1114	Lake Tarawera	R		O			15,000	15,000	4	4												15,000
	TOTAL Eastern								41,600	41,600									26,600					15,000
	Hawke's Bay																							
	\$ 380,624								0	0														
HBAY 001		1910	Salaries	L		B			54,000	54,000	4	4							54,000					
HBAY 002		1454	Education Centre Development	R		O			100,000	100,000	4	4												100,000
	TOTAL Hawke's Bay								154,000	154,000									54,000					100,000
	Taranaki																							
	\$ 419,692								0	0														
TARA 001		1912	Continuation of Management	L		O			21,209	21,209	4	4								21,209				
TARA 002		1911	Salaries	L		B			8,124	8,124	4	4							8,124					
	TOTAL Taranaki								29,333	29,333									8,124	21,209				
	Wellington																							
	\$ 830,600								0	0														
WELL 001		1911	Salaries	L		B			17,788	17,788	4	4							17,788					
	TOTAL Wellington								17,788	17,788									17,788					
	Nelson/Marlborough																							
	\$ 564,125		No CF Bids	L		B			0	0														
N/A									0	0														
	TOTAL Nelson/Marlborough								0	0														
	North Canterbury																							
	\$ 973,187								0	0														
NC 001		1911	Salaries	L		B			31,748	31,748	4	4							31,748					
NC 002		1161	Put & Take Fishery	L		B			23,000	5,000	4	4							5,000					
NC 003		1232	Te Waihora Maimai Agt	L		O			9,000	9,000	4	4								9,000				
NC 004		ARF	Asset Replacement Fund	L		O			40,000	20,000	4	4								20,000				
NC 005		1112	Trout Fishery/Designated Wa	R		O			30,000	30,000	4	4												30,000
	TOTAL North Cant								133,748	95,748									36,748	29,000				30,000
	West Coast																							
	\$ 341,601								0	0														
WC 001		1910	Salaries	L		B			34,350	34,350	4	4							34,350					
WC 002		1910	Salaries	R		O			25,000	25,000	4	4												25,000
	TOTAL West Coast								59,350	59,350									34,350					25,000

Table 6 : Contestable Fund Applications Detail 2024-25 - 432,903																			
Summary of Decisions from NZC meeting																			
App No	Region Base Funding 2024/25	Project Code	Description	L	B	Additional \$ Sought	\$ amount \$ Adjusted	Staff Recommendation	NZC Recommendation	1 Not	2 Good To	3 Recommendde	4 Essential Whole	5 Withdrawn	APPROVED Ongoing Licence Fee	APPROVED One Off Licence Fee	APPROVED Restore Reserves	APPROVED Capital EX	APPROVED from Reserves
Central South Island																			
	\$ 850,235					0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CSI 001		CAP	Electric Fishing Machine	R	C	29,601	29,601	4	4	0	0	0	29,601	0	0	0	0	0	29,601
CSI 002		1910	Salaries	L	B	190,000	95,000	4	4	0	0	0	95,000	0	95,000	0	0	0	0
CSI 002		1912	Staff Expenses	L	O	47,500	23,750	4	4	0	0	0	23,750	0	0	23,750	0	0	0
TOTAL Central South Island						267,101	148,351			0	0	0	148,351	0	95,000	23,750	0	0	29,601
Otago																			
	\$ 1,240,967					0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTG 001		1700	Council Elections & Meetings	L	O	5,000	5,000	1	1	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTG 002		1911	Advocacy/PR/Strategic Rela	L	B	115,000	115,000	4	3	0	0	115,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTG 003		1321	Designated Waters Impleme	R	O	23,000	23,000	4	4	0	0	0	23,000	0	0	0	0	0	23,000
TOTAL Otago						143,000	143,000			5,000	0	115,000	23,000	0	0	0	0	0	23,000
Southland																			
	\$ 803,632					0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
STH 001		1900	Salaries	L	B	10,427	10,427	4	4	0	0	0	10,427	0	10,427	0	0	0	0
STH 002		1115	Maintain Te Anau House	R	O	61,500	61,500	4	4	0	0	0	61,500	0	0	0	0	0	61,500
STH 003		1115	Maintain Angler Access Bricht	R	O	10,000	10,000	4	4	0	0	0	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	10,000
STH 004		1115	Parrie and swan counts	L	B	9,000	9,000	4	4	0	0	0	9,000	0	9,000	0	0	0	0
STH 005		1710	Salaries from DW Reserve	R	O	65,275	65,275	4	4	0	0	0	65,275	0	0	0	0	0	65,275
TOTAL Southland						156,202	156,202			0	0	0	156,202	0	19,427	0	0	0	136,775
NZC																			
	\$ 1,203,086					0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZC 001		1700	Governance Forum Chairs/N	L	B	3,000	3,000	2	1	3,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZC 002		1700	NZC Chair Travel	L	B	7,000	7,000	4	4	0	0	0	7,000	0	7,000	0	0	0	0
NZC 003		1700	NZC Meetings	L	B	20,000	10,000	2	2	0	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZC 004		1820	Financial Audit Fee	L	B	3,000	3,000	4	4	0	0	0	3,000	0	3,000	0	0	0	0
NZC 005		1920	Staff Expenses	L	B	20,000	10,000	4	4	0	0	0	10,000	0	10,000	0	0	0	0
NZC 007		1430	Advocacy for Fish & Game	L	B	37,400	37,400	4	4	0	0	0	37,400	0	37,400	0	0	0	0
NZC 009		1700	Governance Advisor	L	B	20,000	20,000	3	4	0	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	0	0	0
TOTAL NZC						110,400	90,400			3,000	10,000	0	77,400	0	77,400	0	0	0	0

Table 6 : Contestable Fund Applications Detail 2024-25 - 432,903
Summary of Decisions from NZC meeting

App No	Region Base Funding 2024/25	Project Code	Description	L	B	Additional \$ Sought	\$ amount \$ Adjusted	Staff Recommendation	NZC Recommendation	1 Not	2 Good To	3 Recommendde	4 Essential Whole	5 Withdrawn	APPROVED Ongoing Licence Fee	APPROVED One Off Licence Fee	APPROVED Restore Reserves	APPROVED Capital EX	APPROVED from Reserves
	National					0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	\$1,325,600																		
NAT 001		1614	Licence Audit Fee	L	B	2,500	2,500	4	4	0	0	0	2,500	0	2,500	0	0	0	0
NAT 002		1822	Maritime Compliance	L	B	10,000	10,000	4	4	0	0	0	10,000	0	10,000	0	0	0	0
NAT 003		1422	Information Technology - Nat	L	B	18,000	18,000	4	4	0	0	0	18,000	0	18,000	0	0	0	0
NAT 004		1240	RMA Fund	L	O	200,000	200,000	4	4	0	0	0	200,000	0	0	200,000	0	0	0
NAT 005		1711	Election Costs	L	O	15,000	15,000	4	4	0	0	0	15,000	0	0	15,000	0	0	0
NAT 005		1711	Election Costs	L	B	7,500	7,500	4	4	0	0	0	7,500	0	7,500	0	0	0	0
NAT 006		1332	Fish and Game Magazine	L	O	235,000	235,000	4	4	0	0	0	235,000	0	0	235,000	0	0	0
NAT 007		1170	Reg Guides	L	B	4,100	4,100	4	1	4,100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 008		1630	Licence Production	L	B	40,000	40,000	4	4	0	0	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	0	0	0
NAT 009		1810	Managers meetings	L	B	33,000	8,000	3	4	0	0	0	8,000	0	8,000	0	0	0	0
NAT 010		1820	Health & Safety - Risk Mngt S	L	B	5,000	5,000	3	4	0	0	0	5,000	0	5,000	0	0	0	0
NAT 010		1820	Health & Safety - Risk Mngt S	L	O	3,000	3,000	3	4	0	0	0	3,000	0	0	3,000	0	0	0
NAT 011		1423	Website and Social Media	L	B	30,000	30,000	4	4	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000	0	0	0	0
NAT 012		1430	National Liaison	L	B	40,000	10,000	4	4	0	0	0	10,000	0	10,000	0	0	0	0
NAT 013		1442	Marketing and Social Licence	L	B	80,000	20,000	4	4	0	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	0	0	0
NAT 014		1460	Research	L	B	41,000	41,000	4	4	0	0	0	41,000	0	41,000	0	0	0	0
NAT 015		1815	Co-ordination HR - travel	L	B	5,000	5,000	3	3	0	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 016		1820	Strategic Pay reports	L	B	6,000	3,000	4	4	0	0	0	3,000	0	3,000	0	0	0	0
			Reduction of Baseline - Regu	L	B	0	(50,000)	4	4	0	0	0	(50,000)	0	(50,000)	0	0	0	0
NAT 017		1620	Scoping of Digital Licence - U	L	O	50,000	50,000	4	4	0	0	0	50,000	0	0	50,000	0	0	0
NAT 018		1830	Consultant Amalgamation - F	L	O	10,000	10,000	4	1	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 019		1835	Cost optimisation follow up	L	O	20,000	20,000	4	4	0	0	0	20,000	0	0	20,000	0	0	0
NAT 020		1840	Culture and PD for all F & G	L	B	20,000	20,000	3	3	0	0	20,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 021		1850	National H & Safety trainging	L	B	5,000	5,000	3	3	0	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 022		1100	Sports Fish & Game bird sta	L	B	5,000	5,000	4	4	0	0	0	5,000	0	5,000	0	0	0	0
NZC 006 NAT 023		1910	Salaries - HR/HS Advisor	L	B	85,000	63,750	4	4	0	0	0	63,750	0	63,750	0	0	0	0
NZC 008 NAT 024		1700	Governor Training and induct	L	B	30,000	30,000	4	4	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000	0	0	0	0
NZC 010 NAT 025		1910	Salaries - Research	L	B	75,000	75,000	3	3	0	0	75,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
						0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		TOTAL National				1,075,100	885,850			14,100	0	105,000	766,750	0	243,750	523,000	0	0	0
		TOTAL				\$ 2,200,596	\$1,834,596			\$ 24,100	\$ 10,000	\$ 220,000	\$ 1,580,496	\$ -	\$ 624,161	\$ 596,959	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 359,376

APPENDIX 2

Schedule of FISH AND GAME NZ's proposed Licence & Fees for 2024/25 (inclusive of GST)

Sports Fish Licence		2023/24	2024/25	
Category of licence	Applicant Class	Current fee \$	Proposed fee\$	Fee difference
Whole season (1 Oct – 30 Sep)	Adult	153	153	Nil
	Junior	31	31	Nil
	Child	free	free	Nil
Family		198	198	Nil
Non-resident Whole season	Adult	264	264	Nil
	Junior	50	50	Nil
	Child	50	50	Nil
Winter (1 Apr – 30 Sep)	Adult	92	92	Nil
Loyal senior	Adult	130	130	Nil
Local area	Adult	122	122	Nil
Short break	Adult	55	55	Nil
Long-break	Adult	107	107	Nil
Day	Adult	24	24	Nil
	Junior	5	5	Nil
Non-resident Day	Adult	37	37	Nil
	Junior	22	22	Nil
	Child	22	22	Nil
Controlled period		free	free	Nil
Sea Run Salmon		\$5	\$5	Nil
Designated Waters- resident	Season	\$5	\$5	Nil
Designated Waters- non-resident	Day	\$40	\$40	Nil

Game Bird Licence*		2024	2025	
Category of licence	Applicant Class	Current fee \$	Proposed fee\$	Fee difference
Whole season (primarily 1st Sat in May to 31 Aug)	Adult	113	113	Nil
	Junior	26	26	Nil
	Child	5	5	Nil
Day (available from 2nd Monday of season)	Adult	26	26	Nil
	Junior	10	10	Nil

All licence category fees are set as a percentage of the fish or game adult whole season fee and rounded to the nearest \$, hence in some instances the fee difference remains nil.

*Game bird hunting licence fee includes the \$5 NZ Game Bird Habitat Stamp.

Notes:

- A junior means a person aged 12 years or over, but under 18 years at the start of the season.
- A child means a person aged under 12 years at the start of the season.
- Designated Waters, Sea Run Salmon and Controlled-Period licence entitles an adult or junior whole season or family fish licence holder to fish in specified waters or for specified species.
- Whole Season for sports fish extends from 1 October through to 30 September the following year.
- Whole Season for game birds can extend from the first Saturday in May to beyond the traditional closing dates for upland game hunting at the end of August due to special season conditions between February to April the following year for some species, e.g. Paradise shelduck and Pukeko.
- A Game Bird Habitat Stamp fee of \$5.00 (incl. GST) is payable on all categories of game hunting licence and is included in the fees shown in the game hunting licence table above.

Bi-Monthly Chief Executive's Report

JUNE 2024

Foreword

As council is aware, it's been a relatively hectic few months for us, with Only 3.2 FTE on the books compared to the usual 5.8. This was coupled with the busiest period of the year which meant that staff have had to shift focus and take on extra workloads. A massive thanks to Adam and Roslyn who have stepped up and gone the extra mile to hold everything together while we were going through these changes. It does mean that staff have accrued significant time in lieu from working the extra hours including weekends which we will endeavour to take over the coming months. With Beau and Dani coming on board recently I'm really excited about the young, enthusiastic, and highly skilled team we now have.

The lack of staff meant that we have had to prioritise our activities and certain actions we would normally expect to have completed by now have been put on the back burner. For example, the mallard banding, Arapuni fishing and drift dive reports have been delayed until later in the year. We have had to decline several of meeting requests for liaison and advocacy work which we normally attend, and we have not been able to fully partake in mediation for Waikato District Plan appeal process.

As council will see, I have updated the proposed OWP and also developed a calendar of events as an easy reference tool for staff. We will use this as the basis for a quick meeting at the beginning of each month to ensure everyone is aware of priorities and to allocate staff time to required projects.

So please be patient while new staff bed in. We are updating some of our processes including prioritising actions to ensure we perform at a high level for our licence holders. With two new technically competent staff with skills in data analysis and reporting I expect that we will be able to provide more comprehensive reporting to council moving forward.

OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Project 1111 Drift Diving

Project 1112 Banding

At the start of May, Roslyn was contacted by Michelle Bradshaw from DOC requesting that she was now the person that was responsible for sorting the band recovery information from the Fish & Game website. There was a teams meeting with the members of the different regions that enter the recovery information into the databases. Michelle explained the steps that would need to be taken to complete the task each week and also what would need to be done at the end of the season to enter all of the recovery information in Falcon (DOC's database).

Roslyn has created an Access database which she is able to copy the information from the website into a table and then has queries to sort out which band belongs to which region. These are then sent to that region for them to enter into their database. At the end of the season all of this data will be sent back (this will include coordinates etc) to Roslyn to be sorted so it can be imported into Falcon.

Number of bands in total submitted so far is 596 and 229 of these are from the Auckland/Waikato region.

Project 1121: Fish Harvest Survey

Lake Arapuni competition report

The Lake Arapuni fishing competition report and sterile fish report were put on hold to allow time for gamebird ranging. The data for the Arapuni Fishing Competition will need a full review that will take some time. The initial review of the data revealed a significant over identification of marked fish. Due to eel damage to fins a considerable amount of wild fish have been identified as hatchery fish making it appear that the wild population had crashed.

Wild Fish Tagging Report

The wild fish tagging report is on hold so Adam can work on gamebird ranger coordination and prosecutions.

Project 1122: Gamebird Harvest Survey

2024 Harvest Survey + Satisfaction survey

Following opening weekend, we ran the first round of harvest surveys. One hundred and sixty were completed in total. This time, an additional hunter satisfaction component was included (nationally) which involved asking hunters to rate their opening weekend

experience, the number of ducks in their hunting area, and their harvest and to report what they might "typically" harvest on OW. Generally, the harvest survey went smoothly, and the satisfaction component was well received. Most surveys took between 3-6 minutes to complete. From listening to hunters, there seemed to be a mix of factors influencing satisfaction. For example, someone might get zero ducks but be happy to get out for the weekend, while someone else might get their bag both days but be disappointed that they weren't home by lunch. The weather seemed to be another factor - with generally "good" (clear/sunny) conditions across our region.

Project 1161 Trout Releases

Trout releases were conducted at Parkinsons Lake and Lake Whatihua but the Lake Moana-nui release was delayed due to a proposed lake draw down. When the lake is filled the release will go ahead. There was a reported fish kill at Quarry Lake and Adam followed up with Auckland Council staff who were ill equipped to respond and unfamiliar with water quality monitoring techniques.

OUTPUT 2: HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

Project 1211 RMA

Enforcement

Adam made a third attempt at a response from WRC on the Mangatutu earthworks reported in January. The field officer explained that no charges had been laid but corrective action was taken, and the farm is no longer owned by Florida Farms.

Florida Farms was reported to WRC for letting cows into the Mangatutu Steam and an established planting done by WRC and the Hamilton Anglers club. There has not been a response from WRC on their investigation.

Fish Release Applications

Adam evaluated the potential impacts of a Grass carp application for Auckland Council. Adam offered to help with any habitat related issues the group have moving forward as they hope to restore lamprey habitat and populations.

External RMA

The Lake Moana-nui draw down consent is due, and Adam has been encouraging the council to initiate work to renew it as weed control at the lake is important for fishing. The draw down does discharge large amounts of sediment downstream, and the lack of sediment control is an ongoing issue for the lake.

Kaitia Wastewater Treatment Plant

Adam assisted Mischa with technical questions relating to the Northland Regional Council's response to Northland Regions submission on the WWTP discharge consent.

Matarangi WWTP

We made a submission in December last year opposing a short-term discharge consent renewal of 5 years for the Matarangi Wastewater Treatment Plant to allow time for an upgrade to be put in place. We initially had concerns with the consent application and the effects on waterfowl populations of the operation of the ponds and associated avian botulism risk. We have since reached an agreement with the Thames-Coromandel District Council with conditions to include a botulism management plan. As such we have withdrawn our right to present at the hearing on the consent application.

Te Heke Ngahuru ki Te Awa Tupua Consultation

Adam presented on behalf of Auckland/Waikato Region for the Te Heke Ngahuru ki Te Awa Tupua (Te Heke Ngahuru). The long-term strategy sets the direction for activities in the Whanganui River catchment. He highlighted our concern that if the strategy is to make gains in overall water quality then it needs to be high level, liken to that of the Vision and Strategy, where decision-makers are obliged to have particular regard to it. The strategy needs to set clear outcomes with specific timeframes of what it aims to achieve and by when. He further advised against following a collaborative approach like that applied for Plan Change 1 as based on our experience this became incredibly costly with uncertainty of outcome. Adam shared his experience With Plan Change One, the kids fishing program with Taumarunui Community Kokiri Trust, access projects in the catchment and his personal experience with lamprey in the USA. The talk was well received.

Waikato District Plan appeals

We continue to be involved in the Proposed Waikato District Plan appeals process as a s274 party under the RMA. Most of the appeal points we joined have been resolved through pre-mediation negotiations. There is an outstanding appeal that we are joining mediation on however brought by the Department of Conservation that concerns Significant Natural Areas and how they are identified and protected. We want to ensure that areas that meet the criteria of an SNA are protected as such despite not being recognised as part of the councils mapping system.

Consultation on synthetic pyrethroid

We made a late submission to the Environmental Protection Authority on the reassessment of selected synthetic pyrethroids, a type of pesticide already approved for use in New Zealand and are widely used to manage pest insects in multiple sectors, including agriculture, forestry, timber treatment and biosecurity. Due to the toxicity of SP's and multiple mass death events of aquatic invertebrates we consider that the risks that SP's pose to aquatic organisms are so great that they cannot be mitigated with buffer zones no matter how large. As such the use of synthetic pyrethroids.in New Zealand should be discontinued immediately.

Fast-tracking Bill

The new National-led government has introduced a Fast-track Approvals Bill with a purpose to facilitate development. Applications for specific projects will be made to Joint Ministers who will then refer them an expert panel to consider and report back with recommendations. The final decision-making power will lie in the hands of ministers. The Bill is of concern to Fish and Game as it allows decisions to override the environmental and conservation purposes of the Conservation Act, Reserves Act, and Wildlife Act, as well as the RMA. Further, the expert panel has no decision-making power and is not required to seek comment from the public or groups like Fish and Game.

Fish and Game made a submission on the bill noting this concern, and that we should be added to the list of consultees for the Bill. We further sought that Water Conservation Orders be excluded from the bill, there be explicit protections for the habitat of trout and salmon, that s70 and s107 of the RMA, which set minimum standards so that discharges do not result in degradation of waterbodies, should be carried forward into the Fast Track bill. We also sought amendment to make it clear that only new projects can go through the Fast Track process.

Project 1221: Council Land

Kakahi Property

Adam Fixed the fence from flood damage at stone Jug and met with the neighbour to discuss replacing the watering trough to keep the cows out of the wetland and river.

Permits

There have been 170 general authorities permits issued for the game season so far.

Project 1231: Other Land

Project 1235: Trees

OUTPUT 3: PARTICIPATION

Project 1311: Access negotiation

Whakapapa Intake Road

Adam has followed up on the invite to meet with the minister and no action has been taken.

Oio Farm Access

Adam met with Oio Farm management and supplied no public access signs after several tourists had found outdated pamphlets indicating there was access. The new owner would like to keep the public out due to complicated and dangerous access routes. Road access

to the Piopotea is not great but we have asked for permission to drift dive to keep the communication lines open. The owners did confirm that guides had offered “a large amount of money to gain sole access” but they had refused.

Lake Whatihua platform

Lake Whatihua water level has risen, and the platform is now just above water and does not reach the shore. Willows have blocked the drain of the lake keeping the water level high. Adding a second platform similar to Parkinson Lake would be about \$600.

Whanganui River Locked Gate

Adam initiated an investigation into the gate to the Whanganui being locked in Taumarunui and the gate was unlocked. Unfortunately, the gate has been relocked to hold cows in the river flats so Adam will reengage the council when time permits.

Stone Jug Road Enduring Access

Adam has applied for funding from Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa (Walking Access NZ) to place permanent walking access on the Stone Jug Road title. The funding application required consultation with local iwi and neighbours along with approval from the local council. Adam attended the first ever Ruapehu District Council meeting at the Ngāti Manunui marae. Adam presented alongside council staff on the proposed addition of a marginal strip and walking easements on the title. The council approved the proposal, but the funding application is ongoing.

Project 1331: F&G Newspapers

Project 1341: Other Publications

The fish release short videos have been well received and increased interest in the Auckland Lake fisheries.

OUTPUT 4: PUBLIC INTERFACE

Project 1431: Liaison/Advocacy

Kids Fishing

Adam put on a fishing clinic with members of the North Shore Scout Troup where 25 children and caregivers attended. The fishing event was held just after the fish release and there were no fish caught. Although there were parents present for all children there were far too many inexperienced anglers for one field officer.

Advocacy

Adam attended the Lake Karapiro aquatic weed management meeting and expressed his concern about the lack of washdown stations at the lake.

Club Talks

Adam spoke at the Te Awamutu Fish & Game club ATM and thanked the club for their outstanding efforts collecting data for our region.

Project 1441: Displays/Promotions

OUTPUT 5: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Project 1521: Ranger Training

Ranger Coordination

The ranger coordination and preseason planning was conducted for the first time for the 2024 game bird opener. In the past there has not been preseason meetings, comprehensive ranging plans, designated check out times or health and safety briefs for all rangers. The additional coordination took a significant amount of additional staff time in an already busy part of the year. Rangers were informed that they were required to be in pairs and that staff had to know when and where they were ranging. All rangers were required to have an arranged checkout time for their activities and to log contacts. In addition, rangers were informed they need to reapply for their warrants and that next year they would be required to partner with a staff member, police or DOC staff. Most honorary rangers indicated they would not be willing to do this.

Ranger Resignation

Long time volunteer ranger Theunis Miedema has resigned for family reasons. Theunis has been one of our most active rangers and camps on Lake Karapiro during the summers. On a similar note, when staff presented our other volunteer rangers with the potential of being required to partner with police or full-time staff most indicated they would resign.

Opening weekend ranging

We had 4 teams out of opening weekend, honorary rangers were paired up and some came out with staff. Having only 2 staff with any compliance/enforcement training meant we were a bit thin on the ground this year. Honorary rangers targeted public land areas which receive more regular ranging effort and tend to have higher compliance rates while staff focused on private land and areas where we had received reports of non-compliant activities occurring.

Our teams of honorary rangers encountered high compliance rates. One team encountered a group of 4 young hunters (17-year-olds) who appear to have given them at least partially false details and this is being investigated further. It is likely 2 of the party were HWL. Other

teams found 100% compliance rates with some of the usual issues such as hunters having their watches running 15 minutes fast, but without being to accurately pinpoint the perpetrators no follow up action was possible.

Adam and I went to the Hauraki Plains targeting known hot spots. We stopped at boat ramps and hunting camps on the way to our ranging location on Friday night where we checked 13 individuals heading to their hunting stands and issued one offence notification for fishing without a licence. We also used the opportunity to meet up with some large hunting parties at their duck camps, do some PR by discussing various F&G issues. On Saturday morning, we targeted private ponds. Generally, hunters seemed pleased with the number of ducks around with some excellent tallies despite the ideal fishing conditions. Unfortunately, we also found some that did a little bit too well.... Two non-complaint parties were encountered that had had wide variety of offences including unplugged guns, pond feeding, lead shot, HWL and shooting over the limit. 5 infringement notices were issued, and 5 firearms seized. Verbal warnings were also given for not collecting game as soon as practicable. This is a relatively new rule we have in our regulations to try and solve issues we have previously encountered where rangers arrive at a pond or lake with a bunch of dead birds floating on it but without any way of accurately counting them. These hunters ended up being under their limit, but we explained that keeping a rough count of numbers was not advisable and had we turned up later in the afternoon there may have been a different outcome. Three groups of child and junior hunters were encountered using .410 lead shot. The parents were informed of the regulation change and given nontoxic .410 bismuth shot to ensure the kids could continue to hunt compliantly for the rest of the weekend. This initiative was very well received. In total 30 hunters were contacted including 10 junior and child hunters.

On Sunday, staff connected with one of our new honorary rangers and spent the day in the Whangamarino Fish & Game wetlands where compliance was high, but bird numbers were much lower. Warnings were issued for two locations where residual maize was found and one hunter was issued with an offence notification for lead shot. In addition, two individuals were issued offence notifications for unplugged guns at a nearby public boat ramp and their firearms seized. In total staff checked 77 hunters and one angler with 9 offence notifications issued, 1 rod and 7 guns, seized. In future we plan to do more coordinated activities and step up our ranging presence in the region.

OUTPUT 7: COUNCILS

Project 1721: Meeting Costs

OUTPUT 8: PLANNING REPORTING

Project 1841: National Liaison

Adam has continued to act as an expert panel member to advise DOC on their aquatic pest species strategy. DOC staff also requested Adam's help in a Taranaki koi carp removal project where an expert was required to identify fish. Unfortunately, Adam was not able to personally attend but helped via photos and phone conversations.

OUTPUT 9: ADMINISTRATION

Project 1912: Administration

David Klee
Chief Executive