

## **AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF**

If you require further elaboration or clarification of items contained herein, or any other matters relating to F&G business, please don't hesitate to contact your local councillor or the office.

### **Matters arising from the Council Meeting of 15 August 2020**

1. Mr Wilson provided an update on the Open Country Dairy discharge application. Open Country Dairy had lodged an appeal with the Environment Court, which Fish & Game has joined. Although it was up to the Waikato Regional Council to defend their decision, it was crucial for Fish and Game to be there as well.
2. A letter was tabled from Steve Dickson who stated that the timing and duration of the 2020 duck season under the Covid-19 restrictions was a "whole hearted success" and he recommended that these changes should be permanent. Mr Dickson's letter generated considerable discussion amongst Councillors who agreed that the changes appeared to produce better conditioned ducks and certainly better hunting conditions. Mr Klee observed that it would be difficult to determine the impact of the changes on the duck population after just one season.
3. Councillors were very concerned about the proposal by NZ Councillor Noel Birchall to discontinue the mallard research fund. The fund had been established by the imposition of an extra dollar on the game licence specifically tagged for mallard research. It was also emphasized that funds should accumulate as research was expensive and substantial funds were required to do worthwhile research.
4. Councillors discussed the ongoing national review, especially whether it was desirable to amalgamate with adjacent regions.
5. The Operational Work Plan for 2020/21 and the budget of \$795,379 was approved.
6. Mr Matt McDougall's report on the 2019 National Game Bird Hunter Survey was tabled with Councillors noting the overall downward trend in harvest and hours hunted. Councillors agreed that Mr McDougall be thanked for his work on the annual game bird hunter surveys and his comprehensive report.
7. The Chairman thanked Dr Daniel for his very readable Drift Dive reports and especially the clear analysis of data. In reply to a question, Dr Daniel agreed to consider repeating historical trout spawning surveys in the Mangatutu Stream.
8. Mr Dyer's report on the King Country paradise shelduck season was tabled. It was agreed that:
  - The King Country special season be dependent on trend counts.
  - That the first season should be for one weekend only (27/28 February 2021)
  - 10 birds limit
  - Hours to be 6:30am to 8pm.
  - No shooting within 200m from a municipal wastewater treatment plant.
  - \$5 permit charge.
9. The new National Environmental Standards for Freshwater were tabled. Councillors expressed their concern over the impact of the new regulations on landowners and game bird hunters. It was agreed that the NZ Council Chairman be informed of Council's concerns with the new regulations, and Council's disappointment that the regulations were developed without any meaningful input on wetland issues from Fish & Game.

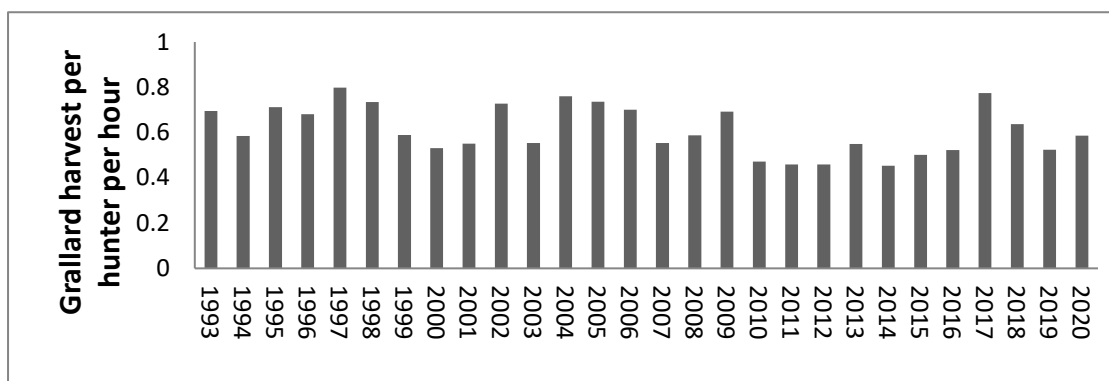
## Matters Arising from the Chief Executive’s Report

**Drift Dive Data:** The table below presents dive counts for rainbow trout in five rivers in the Auckland/Waikato Region (legal sized fish per km) for the years 2015-2020.

| Year | Waihou     |          | Waimakariri |          | Awakino    |          | Whakapapa  |          | Mangatutu  |          |
|------|------------|----------|-------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|
|      | 30-40 (cm) | 40+ (cm) | 30-40 (cm)  | 40+ (cm) | 30-40 (cm) | 40+ (cm) | 30-40 (cm) | 40+ (cm) | 30-40 (cm) | 40+ (cm) |
| 2015 | 25         | 4        | *           | *        | 6          | 3        |            |          | 2          | 9        |
| 2016 | 36         | 2        | 26          | 11       | 29         | 14       |            |          | *          | *        |
| 2017 | 66         | 21       | *           | *        | 10         | 23       |            |          | 2          | 2        |
| 2018 | 18         | 5        | 27          | 4        | 26         | 30       |            |          | 6          | 2        |
| 2019 | 12         | 4        | 11          | 0        | 11         | 16       |            |          | 5          | 4        |
| 2020 | 38         | 12       | 23          | 0        | 7          | 0        | 11         | 30       | 7          | 7        |

\*River conditions were not suitable for a drift dive survey

**Game Bird Harvest Survey:** Preliminary harvest survey data is available. The graph shows the average number of mallard and grey ducks harvested per hunter per hour. It is used as an indicator of hunter success as it includes effort. It appears that the hunters who got out in this last week made the most of it and in fact the average number of ducks shot per hour was better than on opening weekend. Overall, the season appears to have been above average compared to the last decade or so.



**Waikato District Plan:** Mischa Davis has been preparing for the Rural Chapter hearing on the Waikato District Plan. We are still seeking an exemption for maimai for the setback rule that requires landowners to obtain a resource consent for building within 32 meters of a lake or wetland or 28 meters of the Waikato or Waipa river. We are also seeking a new permitted activity rule for earthworks activities undertaken in Significant Natural Areas. And that recreational hunting is considered as part of the reverse sensitivity policy to help avoid future conflict occurring when landuse changes occur near hunting sites.

**Healthy Rivers PC1 Appeals:** We’ve filed an appeal against the decision of the Waikato Regional Council on Proposed Plan Change 1 to the Waikato Regional Plan.

**McPherson’s Quarry:** We have lodged an objection to the McPherson’s Quarry discharge, which is located upstream of our Mangatawhiri wetlands.

**Game Bird Habitat Trust:** David Klee has lodged a further application to the GBHT seeking \$8000 to help complete two wetland projects on the same property.

**Provincial Growth Fund Application:** David Klee is coordinating a large project involving Waikato RiverCare, and the Waikato Regional Council. The project seeks to conduct 18km of fencing to completely retire 130ha including 55Ha of high value wetland.