

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 193<sup>rd</sup> MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2021 AT 12.00PM**

**Present**

Crs Ngahi Bidois, Murray Ferris, Debbie Oakley, Ken Coombes, Geoff Thomas, Lindsay Lyons, Scott Nicol, Mike Jarvie, Kevin Coutts, Jay Tapsell, and Mark Sceats.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson, Matthew McDougall, Mark Sherburn, Eden Mutton, Nerida Evans (Eastern Fish & Game); Carmel Veitch (New Zealand Fish & Game); Barry Roderick.

**1.0 WELCOME AND KARAKIA**

1.1 Cr Ngahi Bidois (Chairman) opened the meeting at 12.10pm with a karakia and welcomed councillors, staff, and Barry Roderick.

**2.0 APOLOGIES**

2.1 An apology was received from Cr Alan Simmons with a request that it be put on record that he had been excluded from this meeting due to vaccine passport requirements under traffic light “Red” being imposed. Cr Ngahi Bidois acknowledged and thanked Alan for not attending on this occasion and reducing the risks to all others in attendance.

2.2 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Geoff Thomas) that the apologies for the 193<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [21/12/2.2]*

3.0 Andy Garrick provided a brief overview of the contents of the Governance Manual and updates which had been provided to each Councillor.

**4.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (11 NOVEMBER 2021)**

4.1 *Agreed (Ngahi Bidois/Mike Jarvie) that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2021 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [21/12/4.1]*

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

5.1 No items were identified for inclusion in Council policy.

**6.0 MATTERS ARISING**

6.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2021.

**7.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS**

- Cr Mark Sceats - NZ Hunter magazine article
- Cr Mark Sceats - NZFGC re firearms licences
- Cr Mark Sceats - Auckland/Waikato Facebook page

**8.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER**

8.1 Councillors were asked to inform the chair of any conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest were recorded.

## **9.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS**

- 9.1 Andy Garrick provided an overview of Health and Safety related activities. Cr Ngahi Bidois queried whether there was a defibrillator on site. Andy Garrick advised that we had made some enquiries regarding funding a defibrillator previously and we could revisit that. Cr Kevin Coutts queried who was ultimately responsible for Health and Safety matters and Andy advised that as Manager and “Officer” for the PCBU (which is what Eastern Fish & Game is, i.e. a “Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking”) he was personally responsible and could be prosecuted for such. Cr Kevin Coutts queried then the need to review at Council level? Cr Ngahi Bidois responded by noting that Council had a duty of care for Health and Safety matters.
- 9.2 ***Agreed (Murray Ferris/Mike Jarvie) that Council receives the Health and Safety, Management, and Licence Sales reports. [21/12/9.2]***
- 9.3 Cr Debbie Oakley questioned whether a planned review of income had taken place to enable a decision to be made on retaining or returning the Government wage subsidy which had been applied for and received in August. Carmel Veitch advised that she will be undertaking the review for all regions which had received the subsidy and would be informing managers of the outcome of this at their next meeting. Cr Ngahi Bidois suggested that this was a management decision that should be left with the manager, Andy Garrick.
- 9.4 Debbie queried the high cost of the Waikaremoana hut electricity bill considering there was currently no access to Waikaremoana. Kate Thompson informed Council that line charges made up the major part of the power costs for the hut due largely to its remoteness. Andy Garrick noted that although the lake was closed for fishing, staff had recently been undertaking access work and other activities in areas which were not affected by the closure and had stayed at the hut as had another party. Debbie had one further query regarding PAYE which Kate advised that she would clarify for Debbie after the meeting.
- 9.5 ***Agreed (Debbie Oakley/Ken Coombes) that Council receives the Finance Report and approves payments for September and October 2021 totalling \$252,891.93. [21/12/9.5]***
- 9.6 ***Agreed (Debbie Oakley/Ken Coombes) that Council approves the proposed budget figures for the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Financial Performance and Cash flow for the 2021-2022 financial year. [21/12/9.6]***
- 9.7 Cr Mark Sceats requested an update on the lake closure at Waikaremoana. Andy Garrick advised that this was a political issue which was currently sitting with the Minister, the Department of Conservation, and the Tuhoe Board, and his latest understanding was that the lake would remain closed until January.
- 9.8 Cr Geoff Thomas requested an update on whether the end of year smelt monitoring programme on Tarawera had been undertaken. Andy advised that the transects had been surveyed last week but it would be some time before they were properly analysed.
- 9.9 Kate Thompson commented on recent licence sales and looked forward with interest to summer sales performance once Aucklanders were able to travel out of their region when covid restrictions were eased next week. She said that although we were down slightly on last year’s results for the same period, we were also working to a reduced budget so there was no need to be overly concerned at this point in time.

## **10.0 2022 GAME SEASON CONDITIONS**

- 10.1 Andy Garrick advised that this agenda item followed on from where Council had got to in its November meeting, and that Matthew McDougall had added more background to the proposed recommendations.
- 10.2 Cr Ken Coombes raised concern over the proposed black swan season for 25-26 March 2023 as he felt that this was too close to the duck breeding season for the region, and suggested that the proposed special swan season be limited to the Tauranga harbour or east of the Kaimai Ranges to prevent disturbance to ducks in other areas.
- 10.3 Cr Kevin Coutts questioned whether the limit on pukekos could be lifted? Matt McDougall was not averse to this but advised that hunters tend not to shoot many and increasing the limit would be very unlikely to increase harvest.
- 10.4 Cr Lindsay Lyons asked whether we could promote hunting of Canada geese to Federated Farmers? Matt McDougall reminded Lindsay of a prior Council policy that staff have nothing to do with Canada geese following their removal from the game bird schedule.
- 10.5 *Agreed (Ken Coombes/Mike Jarvie) that Council supports there being a special black swan season in Management Area A1 for 25 February – 5 March 2023 (i.e. one week and two weekends). [21/12/10.5]***
- 10.6 *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Scott Nicol) that Council supports there being a special black swan season in the Tauranga harbour for 25–26 March 2023. [21/12/10.6]***
- 10.7 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Debbie Oakley) that Council supports there being a special pukeko season 25 February – 5 March 2023 (i.e. one week and two weekends). [21/12/10.7]***
- 10.8 *Agreed (Kevin Coutts/Jay Tapsell) that the season for brown quail in the Eastern Region remains closed for the 2022 season. [21/12/10.8]***
- 10.9 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Ken Coombes) that Council notes the exclusion of the Pirini Family Trust upland game property from the 2022 Game Gazette Notice. [21/12/10.9]***
- 10.10 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Debbie Oakley) that the restrictive conditions for mallard and grey duck be a daily limit of six mallard and grey duck for the period extending from the first Saturday in May until the end of Queens Birthday Weekend (6 June 2022). [21/12/10.10]***
- 10.11 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Ken Coombes) that the ballot rules for the Kaituna Wildlife Management Reserve (and possibly the Awaiti WMR) allow hunting of pukeko for the first eight weeks of the game bird season. [21/12/10.11]***
- 10.12 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Jay Tapsell) that reference to bob white quail is removed from the 2022 Game Gazette Notice. [21/12/10.12]***
- 11.0 Cr Ngahi Bidois welcomed member of public Julian Hughes to the meeting at 12.30 pm informing Council that Julian wished to comment on the agenda item relating to opening dates for lakes Rotoiti, Okataina and Tarawera.

## **12.0 TAKE A MATE HUNTING**

- 12.1 Andy Garrick provided a summary of the uptake of the ‘Take a Mate Hunting’ concessionary licences which were available within the Eastern Region last year. Six licences were issued in total and he noted that there was mixed feedback on how many of those participants might take up duck hunting in the future.
- 12.2 The lack of uptake of this campaign sparked a discussion about promotion of such incentives. Cr Mike Jarvie felt that the organisation was very poor on promotion and

suggested that Fish & Game needed to look at opportunities through not only paper media but radio and television also. Cr Geoff Thomas suggested a simple poster in sports shops had potential to get the message out there. Andy Garrick commented that a range of media has been used previously and unfortunately retail licence agents tended not to want any additional advertising clogging up their shop frontage. He said it was clear we need to use a range of media to capture all age groups given that readership of traditional news media was falling off – but still important for some of our constituents - in favour of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Cr Debbie Oakley informed Council that a working group had been established at the recent New Zealand Council meeting to engage a PR company. Cr Ngahi Bidois queried Debbie on progress on the R3 programme and provided a brief overview of the programme for new Council members. Debbie advised that unfortunately the R3 programme had not been a topic of discussion in recent meetings with the review currently taking top priority.

12.3 Cr Scott Nicol pointed out that Facebook was not used by the younger generation.

### **13.0 TAGGED TROUT EVENT**

13.1 Andy Garrick provided new Councillors with some background to the Tagged Trout promotion which had run for five years from 2015 to 2019. He highlighted the issues in obtaining sponsorship of a major prize after the first year, which had been underwritten, following underwriters no longer providing insurance cover for these types of events, and informed Council that in the years following the major prize was kindly sponsored by private individuals including two of our Councillors. While the promotion had provided a great opportunity for existing licence holders and added value for them there hadn't been great buy in from new participants which was its fundamental aim. The return on investment was marginal with income from new licence holders barely if indeed covering costs. He said there had been discussion around running the promotion later in the season as the opening of the fishing season had not proven to be successful in attracting new participants and there may be a more optimal time of year to do this (February/March 2022 having been proposed in this year's OWP).

13.2 Cr Kevin Coutts questioned whether it was Fish & Game's role to run this type of promotion and whether competitions such as this should better be undertaken by outside organisations as had been done in the past. Cr Murray Ferris advised that it was not run as a competition, more of a promotion to encourage participation.

13.3 Cr Geoff Thomas queried the actual number of prizes drawn from the competition tag returns? Mark Sherburn advised that returns ranged from 1-3 tags per promotion. Geoff wondered whether this created a lot of work for staff for very little benefit.

13.4 Cr Mark Sceats suggested that all tags (i.e. including growth and condition monitoring tags) returned be eligible for a prize draw. It was pointed out that all datawatch tag returns currently do go into an annual draw for a free season licence (which more recently has received sponsorship).

13.5 Cr Lindsay Lyons commented on the buzz that the event created on opening and for those who had caught tags. He had attended the opening of the prize envelopes and witnessed the excitement of the successful anglers and felt very strongly that it was a worthwhile promotion.

13.6 There was some discussion around types of prizes that could be offered and whether they needed to be significant to be successful in attracting new participants. Cr Debbie Oakley pointed out that there is not only the cost of prizes and promotion but also the

cost of staff time, and questioned whether this could be better utilised. While some felt that it was worth proceeding with the promotion and trialling it at a later date as had been suggested (e.g. 29 January to 7 February 2022), others were not convinced that the return warranted the effort required.

**13.7 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Geoff Thomas) that Council supports the option of utilising funds from its current Operational Work Plan to put towards a tagged fish event from 29 January to 7 February 2022 conditional upon gaining suitable prize sponsorship in the coming weeks. Carried 8/3. [21/12/13.7]***

#### **14.0 OPENING DAY FOR THE FISHING SEASON**

**14.1** Cr Lindsay Lyons raised a point of order regarding this agenda item and the proposed review of the opening date for the boat fishing season on lakes Tarawera, Okataina and Rotoiti that had been scheduled at Council's last meeting (11 November 2021). Lindsay advised that this Council was addressing a prior Council recommendation and therefore required a signed letter from one third of the members of the old Council ten working days prior to the meeting to revoke or alter the motion as per standing order 3.9.3. Andy Garrick pointed out that the formal Anglers Notice review was scheduled to commence in February 2022 and that support had been registered at Council's 11 November meeting to bring consideration of this particular item brought forward to enable earlier discussion and a review of the results of a licence holders' survey that was about to be undertaken then in relation to the opening date. There was further discussion as to whether the item needed to be held over for the February meeting, at which point Andy informed Council of its ability to temporarily suspend standing orders - which could be applied to 3.9.3 under standing order 3.8.13 which would enable this discussion to take place at this meeting if Council wished to do so.

**14.2 *Agreed (Scott Nicol/Mike Jarvie) that Council temporarily suspends standing order 3.9.3 "Requirement to give notice of motion for revocation or alteration of a resolution" to enable Council to discuss and vote on the recommendation to review and either reconfirm or revise its position on the anglers notice regulation relating to the opening date for the boat fishing season on lakes Tarawera, Okataina and Rotoiti. Carried 8/2, 1 abstained. [21/12/14.2]***

**14.3** Cr Ngahi Bidois, as Chair, provided each Councillor with the opportunity to express their views on the matter and feedback from Councillors included the following:

- As a duck shooter, where everyone looks forward to the first Saturday in May, would have thought that the first Saturday in October would be more favourable.
- Tradition for angling is 1<sup>st</sup> of October, does not enjoy fishing on Saturdays in school holidays with increased use of lakes for watersports, jet skis etc.
- Previous Council had tried to simplify regulations, this has introduced a complication, would like to see returned to 1<sup>st</sup> of October.
- Return to the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, it is what anglers want, has not heard a positive response to first Saturday. Lots of anglers didn't fish opening this year because it was a Saturday.
- No angling experience, but need to listen to the people, the 1<sup>st</sup> of October is the tradition.
- No strong opinion either way, survey indicated people want it to go back to the 1<sup>st</sup> of October.
- Was changed to the 1<sup>st</sup> way back to align with the rest of the country. Need to put survey into the context of no Aucklanders being able to participate in the

opening due to Covid restrictions. To change again will only confuse, all he had spoken to, primarily out of towners, wanted first Saturday.

- Those that wish to fish opening will take the time off. Simplify regulations, consider impacts on management and staff resources. Carparks already overloaded, supposed to be a tranquil sport. It's the weather not day of the week that dictates numbers. Results of survey gives a good indication. Speaking with anglers for 2 months since opening and 100% were against the change. Dedicated anglers will be there regardless, return to 1st of October.
- Run for a trial period, it's not set in stone and can be altered in future. Next year 1<sup>st</sup> of October falls on a Saturday anyway.
- Eastern used to be the number one in the country for licence sales. Challenge is to increase licence sales - this is an honest attempt by Council to do so.
- Council made the decision to change it on good grounds, made for the right reasons, next year falls on a Saturday anyway and there'll be opportunity for some more robust information gathering next year.

Julian Hughes added that it was interesting to hear the various comments/views and reminded Council that in 2023 anglers would be waiting until the 7<sup>th</sup> of October for the lakes to open.

**14.4** *Agreed (Kevin Coutts/Mike Jarvie) that Council revises its position on the anglers notice regulation relating to the opening date for the boat fishing season on lakes Tarawera, Okataina and Rotoiti and reinstates the prior regulation to open these three lakes on 1<sup>st</sup> October. Not carried, initially 5 in favour, 5 against and 1 abstention, after which Chair had casting vote which elevated the vote to 6 against. [21/12/14.4]*

14.5 Cr Ngahi Bidois confirmed the status quo remains for the next season.

#### **15.0 GOVERNANCE EXERCISE**

15.1 Cr Ngahi Bidois briefly reminded Council of the exercise they had undertaken at the November meeting where Councillors were asked to indicate their particular strengths, knowledge and expertise over a range of areas. He felt that the exercise was more relevant now in light of receiving manager Andy Garrick's resignation. Ngahi overviewed the process to appoint a replacement manager and advised that the process would be inclusive and provide opportunity for all members to be present for interviews.

15.2 Ngahi asked Council to provide their ranking of what they felt was of more importance from the following categories; Organisational Knowledge, Experience, Leadership Competencies, and Personal Attributes while acknowledging that all are of importance. Leadership Competencies were ranked highest (79%), followed by Organisational Knowledge (69%), Experience (57%), and Personal Attributes (48%).

#### **16.0 FINANCIAL PROCESSES (PRESENTATION BY CARMEL VEITCH & KATE THOMPSON)**

16.1 Due to time constraints this item was deferred for a later meeting.

#### **17.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS**

##### **17.1 *Report from the New Zealand Council***

Cr Debbie Oakley reported on the following from the most recent New Zealand Council meeting.

- Reviewing current budgeting process and more particularly grants and levies system. Is there a better way to do it?

- Statutory advocacy is demanding a lot of time at NZC level due to the Labour Government pushing through a large number of changes. Fish & Game needing to be reactively involved.
- Carbon credits and Government encouraging planting of pines and natives – NZC of view that pines are not good for our rivers and streams as natives in terms of nutrient discharge and slash and sediment issues.
- A communications workshop team has been put together and will go out with recommendations via NZC to regions. This will provide a national perspective and will include use of social media.
- Concept of a disability licence being created will be going out to the regions for consultation after a complaint that Fish & Game was discriminating against the disabled due to some not being able to utilise access tracks for fishing but still having to pay full licence fees.
- At NZC's February meeting strategic planning and three year budgets will be discussed. A joint meeting with Regional Chairs is also planned.

Debbie also discussed the regional structure review process underway and advised that feedback from this Council on the progress report circulated to Councillors a few days ago is needed prior to NZC's February meeting. She advised that Council needed to consider not only the proposed regional mergers but also the boundary changes that had been suggested, and asked whether Andy Garrick and staff had a view of what they consider would be appropriate. Andy advised that the review team's progress report that we had just received had included a wide range of merger options along with potential boundary adjustments, and his view was that before taking this any further, a consensus and decisions were required on what criteria should be used to evaluate the various options.

The Chair asked Councillors to indicate their level of support for each of the options involving Eastern Fish & Game. Councillors could vote on each of the following scenarios:

Eastern remains independent	11 of 11 Councillors indicated they would support this
Eastern - Hawke's Bay merger	4 Councillors would support this
Eastern - Auckland/Waikato merger	No support was registered for this
Lose area the Waikato River south of Mihi	No support was registered for this

Cr Geoff Thomas was keen to hear management's thoughts but the Chair dismissed this on the basis that separate feedback was required from both Council and management. Cr Debbie Oakley would summarise Council feedback for the review panel.

## **18.0 GENERAL BUSINESS**

- 18.1 Cr Mark Sceats clarified an issue which had been raised at the November meeting regarding the Minister of Conservation's visit to Ngamatea Station, and advised that this was an event which had been run for a number of years and was open to all parliamentarians and had resulted in a six page Q & A session with the Minister of Conservation which had been published in the NZ Hunter magazine.
- 18.2 Cr Mark Sceats advised that hunters needed to get their firearms licences sorted well before next season due to long processing delays being experienced.

**19.0** Prior to Council moving into Public Excluded, Julian Hughes thanked Council for allowing him to sit in and provide comment on the fishing season opening date for lakes Rotoiti, Okataina and Tarawera, and congratulated Ngahi Bidois on his appointment to Chair. Julian left the meeting at 2.45pm.

**20.0 PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION**

**20.1** *Agreed (Ken Coombes/Mark Sceats) that pursuant to Section 48 (1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, the public be excluded at 2.47 pm from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely to discuss the manager’s resignation, and the process and schedule for recruiting a successor. [21/12/20.1]*

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

<b>GENERAL SUBJECT OF EACH MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED</b>	<b>REASON FOR PASSING THIS RESOLUTION IN RELATION TO EACH MATTER</b>	<b>GROUND(S) UNDER SECTION 48(1) FOR THE PASSING OF THIS RESOLUTION</b>
Manager’s letter of resignation and recruitment of a successor.	Good reason to withhold exists under section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982	Section 48(1)(a)(ii)

This resolution is made in reliance on Section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by Section 9 of that Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public are as follows:

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>REASON UNDER ACT</b>	<b>SECTION</b>	<b>PLAIN ENGLISH REASON</b>
Protect the privacy of natural persons.	Sec. 9(2)(a)	Information provided identifies a particular person or can easily be connected with a particular person.	Once the person to whom the information relates consents to its disclosure.
Protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence ... where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.	Sec 9(2)(ba)(i)	Disclosing the information would jeopardise the relationship with the supplier because the supplier may no longer trust the Council to hold its information in confidence.	Not unless there is a public interest in disclosure of the specific information.

Note:

Section 48(4) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 provides as follows:

“(4) Every resolution to exclude the public shall be put at a time when the meeting is open to the public, and the text of that resolution (or copies thereof):

- (a) Shall be available to any member of the public who is present; and
- (b) Shall form part of the minutes of the Council.”



**20.2** *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Geoff Thomas) that the incumbent Manager, Andy Garrick and minute recorder Kate Thompson remain present for the Public Excluded discussion. [21/12/20.2]*

**20.3** *Agreed (Ken Coombes/Mark Sceats) that the public be re-admitted to the meeting at 3.06pm. [21/12/20.3]*

**21.0** MEETING CLOSED

**21.1** The meeting closed at 3.07pm with a closing karakia by Cr Jay Tapsell.



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**Ngahi Bidois**  
**Chairman**

## SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

### 2.0 APOLOGIES

- 2.2 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Geoff Thomas) that the apologies for the 193<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [21/12/2.2]*

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