CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 211th MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 11.00 AM

Present

Crs. Mark Sceats, Murray Ferris, Lindsay Lyons, Kevin Coutts, Mike Jarvie, Scott Nicol, Pat Swift, Alec McIver, Alan Simmons, and Debbie Oakley.

In attendance

Arash Alaeinia, Matthew McDougall, Anothony van Dorp, Kate Thompson (Eastern Fish & Game); and Barry Roderick.

1.0 WELCOME AND KARAKIA

1.1 Cr Mark Sceats opened the meeting at 11.15am (late start due to traffic issues) welcoming all present.

2.0 APOLOGIES

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Cr Jay Tapsell.
- 2.2 Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that the apologies for the 211th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [24/11/2.2]

3.0 ELECTION OF MEMBERS

- 3.1 Cr Mark Sceats vacated the chair and handed over to Arash Alaeinia. Arash again welcomed all, particularly our two new Councillors Pat Swift and Alec McIver, and also acknowledged and thanked the departing Councillors for all of the work they have done for Fish & Game.
- 3.2 Arash Alaeinia called for nominations for the position of Chair.
- 3.3 Moved (Murray Ferris/Mike Jarvie) that Cr Mark Sceats be nominated for Council Chair, [24/11/3.3]
- 3.4 Moved (Murray Ferris/Kevin Coutts) that nominations for the position of Council Chair be closed. [24/11/3.4]
- 3.5 Cr Mark Sceats was duly appointed to the position of Chair.
- 3.6 Cr Mark Sceats took the Chair thanking Council for their support and called for nominations for the position of Council Deputy Chair.
- 3.7 Moved (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that Cr Kevin Coutts be nominated for Council Deputy Chair. [24/11/3.7]
- 3.8 Moved (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that nominations for the position of Council Deputy Chair be closed. [24/11/3.8]
- 3.9 Cr Kevin Coutts was duly appointed to the position of Deputy Chair and thanked Council for their support.
- 3.10 Cr Mark Sceats informed Council the incumbent for Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust was Matthew McDougall and confirmed that there were no other nominations for this role.
- 3.11 Moved (Murray Ferris/Lindsay Lyons) that Council confirms Matthew McDougall as its representative on the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust. [24/11/3.11]
- 3.12 There was considerable discussion over the NZ Council appointee role as Cr Mark Sceats advised that following his attendance at the last NZC meeting he was keen to remain involved for December and February meetings.
- 3.13 Cr Kevin Coutts requested that Mark share with Council his reasons for wanting to stay in the position temporarily. Cr Mark Sceats advised there were matters relating to

budgeting and other sensitive issues that he had been involved and offered advice due to his legal background which would be more seamless to see these through. Mark advised that he had no wish to continue as NZ Council representative after February as he had other personal priorities. This would also allow some settling in time for the two new Councillors to become better acquainted with the others.

- 3.14 Moved (Murray Ferris/Mike Jarvie) that Cr Mark Sceats be nominated for appointment to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council for the December and February meetings after which a new appointment would be made in the new year. [24/11/3.14]
- 3.15 Moved (Mike Jarvie/Kevin Coutts) that nominations for the position of New Zealand Council Representative be closed. [24/11/3.15]
- 3.16 Cr Mark Sceats was duly appointed to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council for the December and February meetings with the intention to vacate after the February meeting.
- 3.17 Cr Mark Sceats clarified the role of the Executive/Managers Performance and Remuneration Committee which has typically consisted of the Chair, Deputy Chair, and one other. Council acknowledged the importance of the role and the need to have people with a good understanding or experience in managing staff, performance appraisals, and remuneration.
- 3.18 Cr Kevin Coutts as Deputy Chair wished to stand down from this role due to having known Arash for many years prior to his employment with Fish & Game. Council agreed that it was not a requirement that the Deputy Chair be a member of this committee.
- 3.19 Moved (Murray Ferris/Mark Sceats) that Crs. Scott Nicol and Lindsay Lyons be nominated for a position on the Executive/Manager's Performance and Renumeration Committee. [24/11/3.19]
- 3.20 There were no further nominations and Crs. Scott Nicol and Lindsay Lyons were duly appointed to the Executive/Manager's Performance and Renumeration Committee along with the Chairman and Current NZ Council representative Cr Mark Sceats.
- 4.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (10 AUGUST 2024)
- 4.1 Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [24/11/4.1]
- 4.2 **IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY**No items were identified for inclusion in Council policy from the minutes of the meeting held 10 August 2024.
- 4.3 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held 10 August 2024.

5.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

Kevin Coutts – Lake Okataina update

Murray Ferris – Tūhoe relationship

Lindsay Lyons – Past Fish and Game Council Election

Arash Alaeinia – Letter from Hon. Todd McLay

6.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

Arash Alaeinia advised that he had emailed some information to all prior to the meeting which included a declaration of potential conflicts which was completed at the commencement of each term of Council. Arash provided examples of what might be deemed as potential conflicts and advised that the Conflict-of-Interest Register was also circulated at the commencement of each meeting to highlight any conflicts relating to that meeting's agenda. Arash also briefed Council on the Oath of Office, Code of Conduct,

- and the other documents that he had provided to update their Councillor Governance folders.
- 6.2 Cr Mark Sceats reiterated that the full declaration highlighted to Council personal or business interests that might conflict with the role of Councillor for Fish & Game, and the register circulated before each meeting was specific to that agenda. Cr Lindsay Lyons suggested that the term "business" in terms of potential conflicts could be better defined as deriving an income from any Fish & Game resource, using the example of Fishing Guides. Lindsay highlighted that having a conflict was not a bad thing, it just provided Council with the opportunity to discuss whether the member should be involved or able to vote on a particular item.
- 6.3 No conflicts of interest were recorded for this meeting.

7.0 HEALTH & SAFETY

- 7.1 Arash Alaeinia reported an increase in poaching activity on the streams which in some cases presented a health and safety risk to our staff. He advised that he hoped to reestablish a working relationship with the police to assist with some of these incidents.
- 7.2 Agreed (Scott Nicol/Lindsay Lyons/) that Council receives the Health and Safety report. [24/11/7.2]
- 7.3 Cr Mark Sceats queried the incident of a staff member taking ill with leptospirosis and the implication that this might have been related to the work environment. Arash advised that Worksafe had informed him that this was a process that needed to be taken and assured him that there would be no repercussions from this as it could not be confirmed that it was contracted at work, but still highlighted the need for staff to be vigilant in using appropriate PPE and precautions where staff may encounter rat or cat urine.

8.0 2025 GAME SEASON CONDITIONS

- 8.1 Arash Alaeinia advised the purpose of this agenda item was to provide an opportunity for Councillors to highlight any issues or concerns that they would like staff to investigate for consideration at Council's December meeting on this topic.
- 8.2 For the benefit of the new Council members Matt McDougall advised that the new season regulations needed to be submitted to the Minister of Conservation before the end of January which was outside of the Council meeting cycle and subject to summer monitoring (banding, arial counts, crow counts). For this reason, Council have policy in place which was subject to this monitoring and assessment of populations. Matt explained the types of monitoring undertaken and the methods used for assessing population status which are ultimately used for the setting of the season regulations. He advised that banding in the region had occurred for almost 30 years, and this enabled us to not only assess the size of the population but provided a good prediction of its size going into the new season. The policy is reviewed every three to five years and was reviewed most recently at the December 2023 meeting. A copy of that information was provided for this meeting and Matt was happy for anyone to contact him if they wanted some clarification.
- 8.3 Cr Kevin Coutts expressed concern that we have been in a restricted season for about eight years and felt that hunters were not getting value for money particularly for those who work, having their hunting restricted to weekends only. Kevin questioned whether Council could suspend its policy or adjust the restricted season regulations to a sixweek season and eight ducks per day to give the duck hunters better value for money.
- 8.4 Arash Alaeinia asked Council to bear in mind the primary role of Fish & Game is management of the species on behalf of the Crown. He said there was a fine line between managing sustainable harvest and value for money for our hunters acknowledging that if income from hunters reduces then this also has an impact on the

work we can do. There is no government funding of Fish & Game, however we still must do the work and have credible information to support our decisions. If we allow a process that is detrimental to the species, then our credibility and ability to manage the species is put into question. Arash pointed out that the policy was reviewed last year and highlighted that we need to consider the impact of any changes on next season and the seasons after that.

- 8.5 Cr Alec McIver agreed with Cr Coutts in that he had seen a decline in duck hunter numbers adding that many have and will go to Auckland Waikato region to hunt. Alec was supportive of relaxing the regulations or consider implementing a higher limit of drakes e.g. six drakes, two hens.
- 8.6 Cr Lindsay Lyons suggested Cr Coutts and McIver have a discussion with Matt McDougall prior to the December meeting to consider options. He believed it was about providing more opportunity to hunters.
- 8.7 Debbie Oakley provided some background to the prohibition on the use of lead in 410's and asked if this could be brought back to the table to enable more opportunity for youth and seniors. Council discussed in some detail and Matt McDougall suggested that staff could provide a background paper with options for Council's December meeting. Matt informed Council that this region had undertaken significant research on ingestion of lead by ducks, resulting lead poisoning, and impacts on survival rates. This led to Fish & Game's support on the ban of lead shot, however Matt believed that there was merit in raising this again to allow limited use is 410's.

9.0 WAIKAREMOANA SPORTS FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT FUND

- 9.1 Arash Alaeinia provided a brief overview of the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement fund and its purpose.
- 9.2 Cr Mike Jarvie queried the use of the Electric Fishing Machine since it was purchased. Arash confirmed that it had been utilised three or four times but was not aware of results. Matt Osborne was not at the meeting to provide an update.
- 9.3 Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that Council received the Waikaremoana Sports Find Habitat Enhancement Fund update. [24/11/9.3]

10.0 2023-2024 DRAFT PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 10.1 Arash Alaeinia informed Council that the 2023-2024 Draft Performance Report was supplied by email to all, and a hardcopy was available at this meeting for anyone who required one. Arash advised that the audit was currently in progress and Kate Thompson pointed out that the information supplied in this meeting's Finance Report was also what was reported within the Financial Statements for the year.
- 10.2 Agreed (Murray Ferris/Scott Nicol) that Council received the draft reports comprising Statement of Service Performance and Financial Statements for the 2023-2024 year. [24/11/10.2]
- 11.0 Council adjourned for lunch at 12.15pm reconvening at 12.50pm.

12.0 ANNUAL MEETING AND BUDGET TIMETABLE

12.1 Arash Alaeinia advised that the budget process and calendar advice from NZC had been considered and integrated to Eastern's timetable. He confirmed that following prior discussions around Saturday meetings that all meetings for next year had been scheduled for a Thursday and the April meeting moved forward to March to accommodate some discussion around budgets with changes being expected to the budget process for 2025-26.

12.2 Agreed (Mark Sceats/Mike Jarvie) that Council confirms the proposed meeting dates and locations for 2025 as provided and does not have any feedback on the NZC draft meeting and budget timetable. [24/11/12.2]

	Date	Venue	Key Topics
1	Thurs 13 February 2025	Rotorua	Council Priorities,
			Anglers Notice – initial consideration
2	Thurs 13 March 2025	Rotorua	OWP - first draft plus proposed budget
3	Thurs 29 May 2025	Rotorua	Licence Fees
			OWP - second draft
			Anglers Notice – finalise recommendations
4	Thurs 7 August 2025	Rotorua	Finalise OWP
5	Thurs 16 October 2025	Rotorua	Game Conditions - initial consideration
			Annual Performance Report – draft
6	Thurs 11 December 2025	Rotorua	Game Conditions - finalise
			recommendations
AGM	Thurs 11 December 2025	Rotorua	Present Annual Performance Report

13.0 EASTERN FISH & GAME RISK REGISTER

- 13.1 Arash Alaeinia informed Council that the New Zealand Council had recently created a Risk Register and had suggested that regions also have a Risk Register completed and reviewed annually. The register covers all aspects of our business not just Health & Safety. Council discussed briefly and accepted the proposed register for the Eastern Fish and Game Council.
- 13.2 Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that Council accepts the Risk Register developed for Eastern Fish & Game and supports its annual review to coincide with the first draft of the Operational Work Plan. [24/11/13.2]

14.0 EASTERN STANDING ORDERS

- 14.1 Arash Alaeinia advised that the New Zealand Council had updated its Standing Orders and forwarded them to regions to allow regional Fish & Game Councils to incorporate the updates into their own Standing Orders. He pointed out that the main changes were regarding electronic provision of agendas and the ability to have full electronic meetings with decisions being able to be made at those meetings. These meetings would also be online for public viewing.
- 14.2 There was discussion over the cost to send papers as some Councillors preferred to receive paper copies. Arash advised that paper copies would be available at the meeting for those who preferred them.
- 14.3 Council also discussed streaming of the in-person meetings to enable licence holder engagement. Arash Alaeinia acknowledged that this was possible and pointed out that the requirement to stream electronic meetings was to enable public to attend, whereas the public could attend in person meetings if they wished to do so.
- 14.4 Cr Lindsay Lyons requested an amendment to item 1.5.2 relating to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing or their nominee's attendance at meetings. He felt there was a need to add that this did not apply to any Public Excluded part of the meeting. Council discussion covered whether this was necessary or in fact covered by the Public Excluded meeting rules but ultimately agreed that the amendment would provide clarity in the standing orders.
- 14.5 Agreed (Mark Sceats/Alec McIver) that Council adopts the changes and updates to the Eastern Fish and Game Council's Standing Orders as submitted subject to amendment of clause 1.5.2 to add an exception for Public Excluded portions of the meeting. [24/11/14.5]
- 15.0 NZC POLICY ON 10 YEAR SPORTS FISH AND GAME MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 15.1 Arash Alaeinia advised that NZC have been working on guidelines for consultation on the Sports Fish and Game Management Plans involving staff from around the Country and our own RMA Officer, Eben Herbert. He advised that this provides a process for regions to consider as we go in to developing our 10 Year Sports Fish and Game Management Plans and how we engage with our stake holders and mana whenua.
- 15.2 Cr Mark Sceats clarified that all regions are doing this for consistency across all 12 regions? Arash responded yes that is correct advising that several regions' plans were now due.
- 15.3 Agreed (Mike Jarvie/Lindsay Lyons) that Council adopts the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan consultation key elements and guide as policy and the mana whenua consultation as guidance. [24/11/15.3]

16.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS Finance Report

- 16.1 Cr Lindsay Lyons queried two insurance excesses that had been paid as asked what had occurred? Kate Thompson advised that one vehicle was damaged while parked, and the other was a tail gate repair which was required prior to the sale of the vehicle.
- 16.2 Agreed (Murray Ferris/Scott Nicol) that Council receives the finance report approves payments for July and August 2024 totalling \$307,013.82. [24//11/16.2]

 Management Report
- 16.3 Arash Alaeinia advised that staff had had a very busy period undertaking the off season work with maimais and wetlands, spring liberations, increased compliance requirement, and admin work with staff supporting Hawke's Bay and National Office. Arash wanted to acknowledge the staff for their effort over this period.
- 16.4 Cr Mike Jarvie asked about releases to Okataina. Arash Alaeinia confirmed that releases have occurred as planned.
- 16.5 Agreed (Mark Sceats/Lindsay Lyons) that Council receives the Management Report. [24//11/16.5]

Licence Sales Report

- 16.6 Cr Kevin Coutts asked whether Eastern's downturn in sales has been consistent since the introduction of National licences? Kate Thompson advised that the inter-available licence came into effect in around 1996 and will have impacted sales to some extent. She said it was difficult to measure as we don't know the numbers of out of region anglers fishing on licences purchased out of region. Kate advised that she had reviewed opening day data previously and surprisingly the numbers were not huge bearing in mind that is a snapshot of just one day. Kate advised that the last few years results were distorted through Covid with international visitor rates down, followed by significant weather events such as Cyclone Gabrielle.
- 16.7 Council discussion continued and covered the following.
 - Zero based budgets and distribution of licence revenue
 - Taupo sales, prices, and reporting
 - Competing activities, cost of living and depressed economy
 - Expenses associated with Lake fishing
 - Loss of access to the Rangitaiki River over prime summer period
 - Age demographics
 - Loss of boat fishing guides
 - Loss of access to stream fisheries flowing into Waikato River
 - Worldwide declining trend.
- 16.8 Agreed (Mike Jarvie/Murray Ferris) that Council receives the Licence Sales Report. [24/11/16.8]

17.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

- 17.1 Report from Bay of Plenty Conservation Board No Report
- 17.2 Report from Department of Conservation
 No Report
- 17.3 Report from New Zealand Council
 Cr Debbie Oakley's report covered.
 - xero budgeting and cost optimisation
 - TFAC and DOC's proposed updates to their licence system.

18.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

18.1 Letter from Hon. Todd McLay

Arash Alaeinia informed Council that this letter had gone to all Fish & Game Councils and provided us all with the opportunity to give constructive feedback that will hopefully help build the direction and action that the Minister takes moving forward. He said the feedback was required by 16 December and suggested that Council reflect on questions and by email put forward ideas so that discussion and conservation can happen, and he would collate as one document. Cr Mark Sceats highlighted that this was a very important opportunity for us to think of the future for Fish & Game, and Debbie Oakley suggested that Arash could circulate the recommendations from the Future Finance and Future Structure working groups to assist with this discussion.

18.2 Lake Okataina

Arash Alaeinia provided an update regarding Lake Okataina access including open hours, wash station requirements, and the proposed gate system. He said that ownership and maintenance for the gate was yet to be confirmed but likely to be under the Regional Council's control. Discussion occurred around the reliability of the power source and what the position of the gate would be upon power failure, concern that further gates could be installed elsewhere, access by emergency services, and what happens once the CAN order is removed.

18.3 Tuhoe Relationship

Cr Murray Ferris advised that David Parker, president of Waikaremoana Boat Fish Association, had been given the mandate by Tuhoe to invite Fish & Game into their family i.e. become a friend of Tuhoe, and asked that the Chair put out an invite to David to come to Council's next meeting to talk about this process and to also provide an update on the progress with the navigation markers. Council was in support of this action.

18.4 2024 Fish and Game Council Election

Cr Lindsay Lyons expressed concern that once again so many licence holders are missing out on voting in the election because of agents not signing them up, and this year with postal delays. Cr Mark Sceats understood that there are changes to occur in order for all licence holders to be automatically enrolled to vote, this change would happen when the legislation was changed.

19.0 FAREWELL TO DEPARTING COUNCILLORS AND AN HONORARY RANGER

- 19.1 Cr Mark Sceats thanked departing Councillors Debbie Oakley, Alan Simmons, and Jay Tapsell for their hard work and contribution to Council, acknowledging the significant amount of personal time that Councillors put in to represent our licence holders.
- 19.2 Arash Alaeinia highlighted the dedication that Fish & Game attracts within its Councillor team, people who are extremely passionate and devoted who give up so much of their time and at their own cost, to support the endeavours of making sure we can all still get out there and enjoy the fishing and hunting which is part of the New Zealand way of life. From him and the staff he wished to acknowledge the work of

- Debbie Oakley for Eastern and National Councils, Alan Simmons for the years of service not only for Eastern but for National and the Hawke's Bay Region, and Jay Tapsell who had stepped up for his first term in 2021.
- 19.3 Alan Simmons spoke of his initial involvement in moving acclimatisation societies over to Fish & Game and setting up of both the National Council and Eastern Fish & Game. Alan commented on the change of focus of Councils from the nuts and bolts of hunting and fishing to being more about process. He was particularly concerned about the significant loss of access through changing times and land use. Alan felt that he had done his bit for the organisation.
- 19.4 Debbie Oakley had also been involved in the early years having assisted with the employment of staff when Eastern Fish & Game was established. Debbie had completed five years on Council and had been involved with the initial work in modernising the organisation. Debbie acknowledged that Fish & Game had changed but said to move forward the legislation we work under also needed to move forward. Again, Debbie felt that she had achieved what she had aimed to do and leaves knowing that steps are in place to move the organisation forward.
- 19.5 Anthony van Dorp said few words about recently retired Gisborne based honorary ranger, Murray Ferris. Murray's 28 years of service as a voluntary ranger not only included law enforcement, but he was also an outstanding advocate for the organisation and has given a huge amount of his time to Fish & Game, its licence holders, and the resource. While most of Murray's ranging had been around East Coast, Gisborne, Ruakituri, and Waikaremoana areas he has also come to Rotorua for every opening day of the trout fishing season to assist staff with surveys and ranging on Lake Tarawera. Murray and his wife Leslie welcomed staff into their home in Gisborne multiple times a year providing accommodation and meals. Anthony thanked Murray for his magnificent effort providing a certificate and small gift in recognition of his fantastic contribution.
- 19.6 Murray responded with humour letting us know it had taken him 40 years to become a ranger after missing an early opportunity with the acclimatisation society. He said that he had hunted and fished since he was a boy where the goal was to bag something, but it was the science that these guys involve you in that takes it to another level and it's amazing what you can share with people. Murray commented on the phone calls he received prior to the election where he needed to remind people that Fish & Game is not government funded. Murray advised that this was his last term as Councillor, and he's enjoyed every moment of his time working with the team over here.

20.0 MEETING CLOSED

20.1 The meeting closed at 2.40pm.

Mark Sceats

Chairman

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

- 2.0 APOLOGIES
- 2.2 Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that the apologies for the 211th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [24/11/2.2]
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