

NORTHLAND FISH & GAME COUNCIL
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF A MEETING
HELD AT THE NORTHLAND FISH & GAME OFFICE
NELL PLACE, WHANGAREI
7.00PM THURSDAY 8th MARCH 2024

PRESENT:

Acting Chairman: Mark Bell

Councillors: Cameron Shanks, Russell Daniels, Kelvin Ellis, John Skeates

Staff: Craig Deal (Manager), Rachael Quin (Administrator)

In the absence of Chairperson Phil Durham, the council appointed Mark Bell to chair the meeting. The Acting Chairman welcomed the councillors. The Conflict-of-Interest register was circulated around the table for all councillors to sign and declare any conflicts.

APOLOGIES: Phil Durham, Darryl Reardon, John McEntee, Penny Smart (Conservation Board), Nyree Porter (Conservation Board)

It was moved: *That apologies are accepted.*

Russell Daniels / Cameron Shanks **CARRIED**

Previous Minutes

It was resolved: *That the minutes of the meeting held on the 25th January 2024 are confirmed as true and correct.*

Kelvin Ellis / Cameron Shanks **CARRIED**

Matters Arising

None.

Managers' Report

1110 Trend Counts

The manager and field officer travelled to Lake Omapere to meet with Mana Whenua representatives. At the lake it became apparent that nearly all swan had left the area. There are no localities within the regional trend count (aside from Kaipara Harbour) that have had an abnormal increase to swan numbers, so it is suspected that the majority of swan from Lake Omapere have moved to Kaipara Harbour or dispersed throughout the region. The option of

a cultural egg harvest was discussed as a means to manage high swan numbers in future and to provide a source of kai to local whanau.

1172 Game Gazette

The manager tabled Todd McLay's letter to Corina Jordon dated 1 March 2024. There was a discussion regarding the requirement to reinforce future changes to regulations with robust evidence and justification.

1531 Prosecutions

The manager and field officer met with several rural police officers who are willing to support ranging over Opening Weekend of game season. Northland Fish & Game staff will lead this approach and maintain positive hunter engagement. The Firearms Safety Authority has also shown an interest in being present to engage with hunters.

1310 Negotiation

The manager has communicated with PF Olsen forestry company for hunting access however this is unlikely to result in any future hunting opportunity.

1225 Flaxmill Wetland

Work on the bund wall section that has breached in recent floods will be commenced in the near future. The cost will be covered by the operational budget.

1422 World Wetland Day

The manager reported that the Wetland Day event in Underwood Wetland went well.

1226.1 Underwood Wetland

Boards will be put in the control structure. The track will become blocked off by water affecting mowing access. The manager proposed that a new track on the ridge top is a practical solution however this will need approval from Department of Conservation as it will go through a scenic reserve.

The manager advised that Bruce Yorke a passionate angler and past honorary ranger has passed away.

It was moved: *That the Managers and Field Officers' reports be received.*

Kelvin Ellis / John Skeates

CARRIED

NZFGC Update

Recent meeting was 17 February 2024 but no update available.

Base Funding 2024-25 Letter from NZC Chair

Regional Fish & Game Councils received a letter from the NZ Council chair Barrie Barnes requesting regions voluntarily reduce baseline budgets by 3% 2024-25. The manager tabled a

memorandum outlining options for Northland region budget and the effect on operational performance.

Cr. Ellis suggested examining leave liability as a means to contribute toward savings.

Action: The manager to discuss leave liability with NZC financial officer.

Councillors accepted the managers reasoning outlined in the memorandum, considered the options, and believed the reduced base line budget is not sustainable as all options result in risk, uncertainty or loss of service delivery, as well as having the compounding effect of reducing future revenue (licence sales) due to lessened outputs.

Action: The manager is to write a letter to NZC stating that a 3% budget reduction is untenable for Northland Fish & Game Council.

It was moved: ***The manager write a letter to NZC and the Northland Fish & Game council will persist with the original baseline budget and await a response from NZC.***

Russell Daniels / Cameron Shanks

CARRIED

Draft Budget 2024-25 & CF Applications

The draft budget 2024-25 (prior to the request to cut 3%) and contestable funding applications was circulated to the councillors. The manager pointed out budget changes and CF bid request to cover increasing overheads.

Cr Shanks suggested that permit fees be increased in an effort to offset the wetland expense. Cr Ellis offered to contact potential sponsors for the proposed fish out day event.

Acting Chair, Cr. Bell stated that spend should focus less on maintaining wetlands and prioritise activities that drive licence sales.

It was moved: ***That the Budget 2024-25, as per the agenda, be approved.***

Kelvin Ellis / Cameron Shanks

CARRIED

It was moved: ***That the Contestable Funding Bids 2024-25 be approved.***

Kelvin Ellis / Russell Daniels

CARRIED

Paradise Shelduck Moulting Survey 2024 Report

The Paradise Shelduck Moulting Survey report was circulated indicating a strong population regionally and that the 9-day special season is working as a means of managing flocks of concentrated birds and providing additional opportunity for hunters.

Letter from NRC regarding swan management and NFGC response

The managers response to Geoff Crawford was supported by council.

Health and Safety Report

Northland Fish & Game is required to give a Health & Safety report at each council meeting detailing:

- The implementation and adherence to Health & Safety policy/manual
- Any new issues or hazards that have arisen and how these have been addressed
- Progress with any ongoing issues
- Outcomes of audits and reviews required in the Health & Safety manual
- Any near misses or injuries

It was moved: **That the Health and Safety Report is received.**

Cameron Shanks / John Skeates

CARRIED

Executive Limitations Report

It was moved: **That the Executive Limitations Report is received.**

Kelvin Ellis / Russell Daniels

CARRIED

Financial Reports

The financial report ending 31 January 2024 with fish licence sales YTD to 5 March 2024 was circulated to the councillors.

It was moved: **That the Financial Report is adopted.**

Kelvin Ellis / John Skeates

CARRIED

General Business

Councillors agreed to meet for a strategic session to brainstorm a new way forward for Northland Fish & Game with an emphasis on promoting Fish and Game activities and recruiting licence holders.

Action: Manager to find out about other F&G council R3 activities.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Mark Bell
Acting Chairman

