

**Agenda For The Meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council
On 26th September 2024
At Cromwell
Starting 12.00 noon with a light lunch**

Timetable	Council Meeting
11:00am	Executive meeting
11.45 am	Lunch
12:15 pm	Councillor Only Session
12:30 pm	Meeting Begins
2:30 pm	Afternoon Tea
2:45 pm	Public Forum
3:00 pm	Public Excluded Session
5.00 pm	Meeting Ends
6.00 pm	Dinner Thai Crom

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1.0 Present and Apologies

2.0 Matters to be raised not on the agenda

3.0 Declarations of Interest

4.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

**Minutes for the Meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council
on 25 July 2024, 12.30pm
at Clutha District Council Rooms, 1 Suffolk Street, Tapanui**

1.0 Present and Apologies

Present: Colin Weatherall (Chair), Mike Barker, Rick Boyd, John Highton, Vicky May, Adrian McIntyre, Blair Trevathan, Paulette Tamati-Elliffe (Ngāi Tahu).

In attendance: Ian Hadland (CE), Bruce Quirey (Communications Officer).

Present via video conferencing: Ian Cole, Neil Harraway (Otago Conservation Board).

Cr Cole and Mr Harraway did not stay for the whole meeting, because of technical issues with internet connection.

Apologies: Nil.

The Chair opened the meeting at 12.40pm. He said the Council had received a letter of resignation from councillor Ray Grubb. The Council acknowledged and thanked Cr Grubb for his services to the organisation. Councillors noted that Cr Grubb's inside knowledge of the political system had been invaluable.

Moved (Cr Weatherall/Cr McIntyre)

Council acknowledges the resignation of Ray Grubb and extends a vote of thanks for his services to the organisation.

Carried unanimously.

2.0 Matters to be raised not on the agenda

None.

3.0 Declarations of Interest

The Chair asked Councillors to update and sign Declarations of Interest. He reminded Councillors it was each person's responsibility to record any conflicts of interest.

4.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Moved (Cr Highton/Cr Boyd)

- **That the minutes of the Council meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council held on 23rd May 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record.**
- **That the minutes of the Council extraordinary meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council held on 25th June 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record.**

Carried unanimously.

5.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Councillors asked for an update about test results on the mass bird kill at Dublin Bay. The CE said it would be discussed in the public-excluded session in case the investigation led to litigation.

Councillors said they would like more time to discuss staff reports. The CE said the reports deserved discussion. Another region, for instance, presented staff reports in a workshop. Councillors pointed out that some of their experience might be useful, however, they should not make suggestions to staff that were not part of their governance role. The Chair said the CE would look for a suitable process.

6.0 Health and Safety Report

The CE was asked if he was looking for a provider for a defensive driving course for staff. The CE replied he had had a quick look but had not progressed far.

Moved (Cr Boyd/Cr May)

That the Health and Safety Report be received.

Carried unanimously.

7.0 Items Requiring Decisions

The meeting advanced discussion to item 7.2.

7.2 Draft Otago Fish and Game Regulation Setting Policy July 2024

The CE said the draft regulation setting policy had previously been before the Council and was sent back to staff for further editing in consultation with Crs Highton and Boyd. He believed the revised policy was in a sound position and he was conscious of the time frames necessary for each triennial review. He said the Council would seek input from the Ngāi Tahu representative.

In response to a comment by Cr May about the code of conduct, the CE said it was a national matter, and not a regulation policy.

The Chair welcomed the Ngāi Tahu representative, who joined the meeting at 12.55pm.

Cr Boyd suggested an amendment to the first sentence of the purpose of the policy, to read as follows:

“As a Crown Entity and willing Treaty Partner, the Otago Fish and Game Council has statutory responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, the Conservation Act 1987 and the Wildlife Act 1953.”

Cr Cole concurred and said reference to the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan was critical.

The Chair suggested Council make a second resolution asking NZC to review the code of conduct.

It was raised that the Minister might require a longer period to consider regulations.

The CE asked the Ngāi Tahu representative about a list of organisations to be approached for consultation, and she replied she had made some notes.

Councillors talked about the difference between the code of conduct and the regulations, for instance, regarding the use of non-toxic shot.

It was said there needed to be a separate angling code of conduct. Concerns were raised about the disposal of fish waste and fishing line, and the humane killing of fish.

Moved (Cr Boyd/Cr Barker)

That Council adopt the regulation setting policy and appended procedures.

Carried unanimously.

Moved (Cr McIntyre/Cr Weatherall)

Council write to the NZC requesting a review of the code of conduct, based on matters raised at this meeting, and in consultation with other F&G regions.

Carried unanimously.

7.1 Otago Sports Fish and Game Management Plan 2015 – 2025 review

The CE said the Otago Sports Fish and Game Management Plan 2015 – 2025 was due to expire. The Environmental Officer was keen to start developing a new plan and to ask mana whenua how they wished to be involved in the process. Council sought the advice of the Ngāi Tahu representative at the meeting.

The CE outlined some options, saying staff could begin writing the plan and include sections around consultation with mana whenua. Mrs Tamati-Elliffe said Ngāi Tahu would probably prefer to see an initial draft of the plan, and that it be circulated to runanga for feedback.

The CE undertook to email the Ngāi Tahu representative outlining the consultation process and confirming with mana whenua how they wished to engage with the Council in this endeavour.

In response to a councillor query, the CE said regional F&G councils had received a template draft plan from NZC. Answering another question, the CE said the species management section of the plan would provide for consultation about mahinga kai. The CE said it was a year-long process.

Moved (Cr Boyd/Cr May)

- 1. Formally ask mana whenua, via the Ngāi Tahu representative to Council:**
 - a. whether they would like to be involved in the development of a SFGMP;**
 - b. how they would like to engage with the Otago Fish and Game Council in this endeavour; and**
 - c. if they would like to meet with staff to discuss the above.**
- 2. Direct staff to undertake an analysis of the current SFGMP provisions.**
- 3. Direct staff to develop a project plan for the SFGMP review, upon delivery of relevant NZC guidelines.**

Carried unanimously.

7.3 Adoption of 2024/25 Operational Workplan (OWP) and Budget

The CE said the draft OWP had been put forward. The NZC had approved a contestable funding bid by Otago F&GC to spend from its own reserves. The CE said the OWP was ambitious for a small team, and tried to retain as much flexibility as possible to make use of other opportunities as they arose.

One outstanding matter was the unfunded staff member for advocacy and liaison. The role would be covered under the communications strategy implementation plan, and the job description for the role would need to align with the direction of the implementation plan. The CE suggested that Council leave the unfunded staff member until an implementation plan was written and encouraged Council adopt recommendations on the OWP and budget but delay a decision about appointing another staff member until the communications strategy had been adopted and the implementation plan was completed.

He said Council could set an indicative budget to help with the implementation plan. Regarding Clutha Lagoon in the OWP, Cr Highton asked about a reference to it depending on external funding. The CE replied there may be access to funding from Contact Energy via the Trust or from Otago Regional Council.

Council agreed to defer a decision setting an indicative budget (from the Council's General Reserve) for the implementation of the Communications Strategy.

Moved (Cr Highton/Cr Barker)

- 1. That the Council adopt the 2023/24 Operational Workplan and Budget**
- 2. That Council delay the decision for appointing a new staff member until Implementation Plan for the Communications Strategy is complete.**

Carried unanimously.

Moved (Cr Weatherall/Cr McIntyre)

That the meeting moves into Public Excluded Items.

Carried unanimously.

8.0 Public Excluded Items

8.1 Confirm Draft OF&GC Public Excluded Minutes from 23rd May 2024

8.2 Dunedin Office Replacement Update

8.3 Wanaka Subdivision Update

8.4 QLDC Consent Agreement – CE Verbal Report

8.5 Habitat Fund Application JM Wetland Development

Moved (Cr McIntyre / Cr Highton)

That Council approve the Habitat Enhancement Fund application for the John-Mark Leitz Wetland Development for the sum of \$2,000 and 200 Carex secta.

Carried unanimously.

8.6 Habitat Fund Application Hill Wetland Enhancement

Moved (Cr McIntyre/Cr Barker)

That Council approve the Habitat Enhancement Fund application for the David Hill

Breeding Enhancement for the sum of \$1,000.00, and 100 Carex secta.

Carried unanimously.

The Chair complimented F&G staff for a good report and Council looked forward to the follow-up in due course. Councillors commented on the usefulness of follow-up reports on HEF projects and suggested that they could include comments on waterfowl numbers. It was suggested Council could do

more habitat enhancement work with landowners if additional funds became available.

8.7 Otago Fish and Game Council Communications Strategy Final Draft

The Communications Officer outlined the process undertaken with consultants to develop the communications strategy. The strategy had identified Otago F&GC stakeholders with the most influence and/or interest. It set five key priorities for 2024-25, as outlined in the executive summary.

He noted the strategy had not identified many areas where current communication activities could be cut. The challenge in implementation would be to recognise what activities would be most effective and what activities, including current activities were of less priority.

On adoption of the strategy, the next step would be to develop an Implementation Plan, Key Messages and a budget to be presented at the next Council meeting in September.

Moved (Cr McIntyre/ Cr Barker)

- **Adopt the Communications Strategy.**
- **Develop a 2024-25 Communications and Engagement Implementation Plan and Key Messages for Council's consideration and adoption at the September meeting.**

Carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 2.15pm and resumed at 2.30pm.

Cr May assumed the Chair role.

9.0 Financial Report

The CE talked to the Financial Report. Cr Cole questioned licence sales figures on page 38 of the agenda. The CE undertook to look into them.

Concern was raised about an error in the 2023-24 regulation guide book about the Manuhereki River. The CE said the Anglers Notice was correct, however, the online version and the regulations book were not correct. That had been corrected.

The CE outlined proposed changes in the titles of financial reserves. The historic property reserve did not meet the current needs of Council, as a receptacle from which to buy assets, including the purchase and maintenance of sports fish habitat and access to waterways and rivers. The new title would be Otago Property Reserve.

A question was raised whether capital reserve should be used for ongoing maintenance. The chair responded that if capital was used to purchase an asset, then that fund could be used to maintain its value.

The CE said that the Historic Property Reserve had been used for the maintenance of Bullock Creek. It was suggested the Council should use that money to invest to generate sufficient income for maintenance.

Table 1. Proposed Changes to reserves

Reserve name	Purpose
Historic Property Reserve	Historic Reserve from Property Sale in late 1990's – Dedicated to the purchase of other properties. Council agreed in 2019 to spend from this reserve to advance its ex Wanaka hatchery site subdivision
Change to	
Otago Property Reserve	<i>Funds from historic and recent property sales which is dedicated to acquiring and maintaining essential land and building assets in the Otago Region. This includes the purchase and/or maintenance of important sportsfish and gamebird habitat and public accessways to rivers and lakes.</i>
Reserve name	Purpose
Non-Resident Levy Reserve	Income collected from the Non resident Levy on Non-resident fishing licences to be used for Council requested research, projects and sensitive fisheries within Otago Region
Change to	
Designated Waters Reserve	<i>Income collected from the sale of Designated Waters licences to be used for Council approved research and management of Designated Waters and other pressure sensitive fisheries.</i>

Various views were expressed for and against renaming the Non-Resident Levy Reserve due to the Minister's recent decision to decline the implementation of DW waters in other regions and potential implications for the existing system. Councillors agreed the name of the Non-Resident Levy Reserve should stay the same for now.

Cr Cole departed the meeting at 2.45pm, noting difficulties with the internet connection.

Moved (Cr Boyd/Cr McIntyre)

1. That Council adopts the new title and purposes of the Historic Property Reserve as described in Table 1.

2. That the Finance report and Licence Report to the 30th June 2024 be received.

Carried.

10.0 Chief Executive's Report July 2024

A question was asked about ranger recruitment. There was an ongoing view in the upper Clutha that there were not enough rangers.

Moved (Cr Highton/Cr Boyd)

That the CE's report be received

Carried

Cr Weatherall resumed the Chair's role.

11.0 RMA Planning and Consents Report

The CE said there was not a lot of activity regarding consenting, however, the Environmental Officer was busy with the Proposed Regional Policy Statement and Land and Water Region Plan.

There was discussion about F&G's withdrawal from its membership on the MEGG, which had unfortunately become untenable. Councillors passed on their sincere thanks and appreciation to the Environmental Officer for unwavering dedication to holding groups to account.

Moved (Cr Trevathan/Cr McIntyre)

That the RMA Planning and Consents Report be received

Carried

12.0 Committee & Delegate Reports

12.1 Clutha Fisheries Trust

Nothing to report.

12.2 New Zealand Fish and Game Council

Cr Barker said NZC met on June 18-19. NZC considered the licence fee consultation document from regions. Three regions recommended the licence fee should be increased, and one region also thought the DW licence fee should be increased. The NZC also considered feedback on the method of licence fee equivalents. Other matters covered included policy adoptions for the infringement notice system, the national policy for prosecution, RMA fund updates, the NZC financial report, a policy report on time in lieu, an RMA update on practice notes, the Anglers Notice, the Designated Waters licence fee and DW proposals. Individual region council's recommendations for DW proposals were taken by NZC and rewritten for the Minister. DW applications were made by Southland, West Coast, Nelson/Marlborough and North Canterbury F&G regions. None were approved by the Minister. Otago F&G councillors expressed disappointment in the Minister's decision.

The CE asked if the NZC proposal about infringement fines and compliance was approved for consultation with F&G regions. Cr Barker replied yes.

The CE said it was not a NZC role to discuss DW regulations. When regulations were fed to the NZC, it was not for NZC to reconsider them. Their function was one of co-ordination of regional notices to the Minister.

Councillors agreed, saying Council should write to the NZC to say they had interfered in the legal process. The matter would be discussed at the joint meeting with Southland F&GC this evening.

Asked by the Chair whether there was any discussion on Otago's challenge regarding the use of reserves, Cr Barker said he understood the NZC Chair was seeking another legal opinion.

The CE pointed out that Otago F&GC had not received the minutes from the NZC meeting. Council needed to request a more streamlined process for NZC minutes.

Moved (Cr May/Cr Trevathan)

That the NZC report be received.

Carried unanimously.

12.3 Ngai Tahu

The Ngāi Tahu representative noted it was her second in-person meeting with Otago F&GC and she was still coming to terms with the body of business. From Ngāi Tahu's perspective, it was good to get a sense of the desire to build relationships with mana whenua. That's something she would like to keep tracking along. The Communications Strategy was looking at projects potentially with mana whenua, and understanding aspirations, values and ideals. Ngāi Tahu would not hold back in coming forward when they needed to advise on things.

It was also important to know the Mata-au Trust had been established from Contact Energy mitigation funding. It had taken several years for Ngāi Tahu to establish the Trust. It looked like the Trust had contracted a project manager.

The review of the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan and the consultation role would create opportunities to share aspirations and ideas about mahinga kai and bring proposals to the table.

The Chair thanked the Ngāi Tahu representative for the report. The Council welcomed the opportunity to take guidance on how Otago F&GC and Ngāi Tahu could meet each other for a common outcome and would be delighted to be able to move forward wherever possible. For any doors that might open, the Council would be aware of what it walked through and take one step at a time. Taking the steps together would help make the progress the Council genuinely wanted.

Moved (Cr Weatherall/Cr McIntyre)

Council receives the Ngāi Tahu representative report.

Carried unanimously.

12.4 Conservation Board

Nothing to report.

Mr Harraway left the meeting early due to issues with internet connection.

12.5 Clutha Mata-au Sports Fish and Habitat Trust

Cr Boyd, the Trust chair, said the Trust had not met since the July Council meeting.

Since the Trust had forwarded its proposed business plan and budget requests to Contact Energy, it had previously received no response. However, it now appeared that Contact Energy had located the funding agreement, and it would be signed today. However, Cr Boyd had not received confirmation that had occurred. The Trust was still in limbo, having clear proposals before Contact Energy, but was yet to open a bank account because it required a copy of the signed funding agreement.

Once that occurred, Cr Boyd would be able to meet the Otago F&GC CE and discuss the Trust's proposed work with F&G. The Trust saw F&G being contracted for a number of projects.

Cr Boyd said he would also be at the stage when he would also approach Ngāi Tahu, because there was a place available as a trustee on the Trust.

He also said there was an issue about the status of the Trust as charitable organisation. That issue would need to be resolved with the Charities Commission.

The CE was asked for a list of F&G projects in the lower Clutha/Mata-au. The CE replied that the Lower Clutha Sports Fish Management Plan would be reported on to Contact Energy at the end of September.

Moved (Cr Trevathan/Cr Highton)

That the Clutha Mata-au Sports Fish and Habitat Trust report be received.

Carried unanimously.

12.6 Tiaki Maniototo

Cr Highton attended three Tiaki Maniototo meetings on the previous Thursday and Friday. The Tiaki Maniototo governance meeting had received an important 2024 report on water quality. However, the report had been sent back for review. Cr Highton said the report provided good data to guide the actions of Tiaki Maniototo regarding water quality. The report's content agreed with a water quality report from Traverse Environmental which summarised 10 years of data on the upper Taieri. The upper river water quality near Paerau was good but the lower river from Cogan's Bridge to Waipiata contained a lot of silt.

Ngā Awa was also finalising a water quality report. F&G might also want to consider a DOC report on climate change for the Taieri.

A biodiversity plan produced by a consultant also defined different types of landforms in relation to wetlands in the Upper Taieri which might be managed differently, including issues about grazing.

Logan Burn Reservoir was at an historically low level with potential implications for maintenance of Taieri River flow in summer.

Cr Highton had invited Tiaki Maniototo to visit Takitakitoa wetland to provide an opportunity to talk to farmers. He suggested the meeting could provide a model to meet other catchment groups.

Upper Taieri Wai had met on Friday. It was the oversight group for Tiaki Maniototo and a planning project for the health of the whole Taieri.

Tiaki Maniototo also held an event to report back to their community. A management plan for the upper Taieri, to be produced by the ORC, had not been progressed due to uncertainty about the future of regulations.

Moved (Cr McIntyre/Cr Trevathan)

That the Tiaki Maniototo report be received.

Carried unanimously.

13.0 Correspondence

13.1 NZC to Otago

13.1.1 Appointments to the Game Bird Habitat Trust

13.1.2 Future Finance Working Group

13.1.3 Future Structure Working Group Recommendations To NNZFGC

Cr Barker said reports by the Future Finance Working Group and the Future Structure Working Group had been tabled but had not been adopted.

The Chair said Council should acknowledge those reports having been received.

The Crawford Report was still in the early stages of being drafted.

The Otago Chair had sought an undertaking from the NZC Chair that before NZC actioned the reports, Otago F&GC would be able to comment on sections that pertained to this region.

The Chair said he felt Crawford had provided Otago F&GC little or no consultation to consider its position.

The CE said the Crawford Report had been delayed. The Future Finance Working Group made reference to the Crawford Report, and it was highly likely there was synergy between the two reports.

13.2 Otago to NZC

13.2.1 Feedback on 2024/2025 Licence Fee Recommendation

13.2.2 NZF&GC Policy Feedback

13.2.3 Draft Ranger Health and Safety Policy

13.3 General Correspondence In

13.3.1 Ray Grubb Resignation from Otago Fish and Game Council

The Chair said the resignation letter was noted and he referred to the motion earlier in the meeting to thank Cr Grubb for his service.

13.4 General Correspondence Out

Moved (Cr Weatherall/Cr McIntyre)

Correspondence is noted and received.

Carried unanimously.

14.0 Items to be Received or Noted

Meeting adjourned briefly and resumed at 4pm.

14.1 Bendigo Wildlife Management Reserve Works 2022-2024

There was discussion about a high number of swans at Bendigo, willow spraying and the future of a cycle track. The contractor for the track had changed and the proposal was still in the consent process and in negotiations with landowners.

The CE said Bendigo Wildlife Management Reserve Management Plan was about to go out for consultation, which would then enable Otago F&GC to apply for funding.

14.2 Designated Waters Fishery and Controlled Fishery Report 2023/24 Season

There was a discussion about occupancy rates of the Greenstone Controlled Fishery. The CE clarified the data showed the number of days used divided by the number available over the three beats in the February and March period. Cr Barker noted the rates were decreasing. Cr Boyd said he believed didymo had affected the fishery and people were becoming less willing to hike to get to the middle beat.

The CE complimented the Fish & Game officer for the standard of his report.

14.3 Project 1122 – Creel surveys of Lake Hāwea

The CE said the Lake Hāwea creel surveys had one year to go out of a three-year data set. At the end of that, a more comprehensive report would look back at previous data sets.

14.4 Development of a Spawning Layer

The CE said development of a spawning layer was a highly technical modelling project. The Fish & Game officer had taken all catchment attributes and put them into a model. It modelled previously identified spawning areas and applied the data across the whole region to predict where spawning would occur. It had been proved to be highly accurate. The model would limit the areas where F&G would need to look for spawning. It also would be provided to ORC to be used as a layer where spawning might typically occur. When considering consent applications, ORC will know where spawning is likely to occur, and F&G will be identified as an affected party.

Councillors complimented Mr Couper on the report and encouraged him to publish the spawning model as a paper in a peer-reviewed journal.

14.5 Acoustic Monitoring 2024

The CE said Otago F&G was developing acoustic monitoring as a long-term monitoring technique. Councillors suggested OF&G investigate purchasing its own acoustic monitoring equipment.

14.6 Habitat Enhancement Fund Project Updates

The CE outlined a review of habitat enhancement projects from 2018 to 2020. Results had been mixed and F&G had reviewed its processes to ensure habitat fund recipients met agreed expectations. The CE said F&G usually did not pay HEF projects until the work had been completed. On balance councillors agreed that HEF projects were a good return on investment for licence holders.

14.7 Compliance Summary Report

The CE said prosecution guidelines, due for the September meeting, would include a table of fees. Otago F&G was keeping licence checks up despite diminishing ranger numbers.

14.8 Summary of Fishing Competitions for the 2023/24 Season

The summary outlined monies received and outgoing regarding fishing competitions, to explain where it was going and what the funds were used for. The Chair commented that there had been a good number of events.

Moved (Cr May/Cr McIntyre)

That the reports be received and noted, and Council acknowledges the work put in by staff.

Carried unanimously.

15.0 General Business

Councillors and the CE discussed the issue of Canada geese. The CE reminded councillors of the history of Canada geese management, which was removed from Fish & Game by the then-Minister after lobbying by farmer groups. Canada geese numbers had increased substantially since that time. The CE suggested F&G could encourage duck hunters to hunt Canada geese, however, they were a difficult species to hunt even for experienced hunters.

The CE said F&G should concentrate R3 promotions on under-utilised resources.

Chair declared the meeting closed at 4.55pm.

5.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

6.0 Health and Safety Report

August September 2024

Events/Work Requiring OHS Planning – Job hazard sheets completed.

- Take a Kid Fishing Days
- Learn to fish adult classes

OHS Audits - Internal

Completed audits:

- Dunedin Chemical audit
- Dunedin office hazards

Next audit areas:

- Main Hazard Register
- Boats
- Vehicle hazards

Incidents/Accidents/Near Misses/New Hazards

- Cut finger from a nylon weed eater at the wetland. Medical assistance not required, finger healing. Mitigation - shut machine off before sifting branches around area being cut.
- A PVC pipe was dropped on a foot causing pain and swelling. Steel cap boots were worn but it hit higher. Mitigation more care and share the lifting if heavy or awkward.

Training Completed

- Annual ranger training at Roxburgh
- CERT training for some staff and rangers
- Oceana Gold OHS and hatchery induction update for staff

General Discussions, Actions

- Defensive driving course for staff – Comparing providers
- Wear protective clothing when investigating bird deaths, warning of avian bird flu to possibly arrive in NZ

Recommendation

1. That this report be received

Sharon Milne
Administration Officer
September 2024

7.0 Items Requiring Decisions

7.1 Otago Council Elections

There will be no need for a Council election this term as eight candidates stood for nine positions available in Otago.

Statutory timetable from here:

- **Tuesday 15 October:** - Official Results produced. The returning Officer signs the certificate, and candidates are advised of the Final Results.
- **Wednesday, 16 October:** Public notices prepared and signed off for publication.
- **Saturday 19 October:** Official Declaration - Public Notice of Results in regional dailies.
- **Wednesday, 30 October:** Elected members to take office.
- **Wednesday, 20 November:** Last day for new councils to have met and appointed one representative as a member of the NZ Council.

Congratulations to Councillors in waiting - returning councillors Vicki May, Colin Weatherall, Adrian McIntyre, Mike Barker, John Highton and Blair Trevathan. Welcome to new Councillors John Preedy and John Cruden.

Unless there is some sort of glitch, all will be duly appointed to the new Council on the 15th October 2024.

Inaugural meeting of new Council

You will note that a meeting needs to be held ahead of our regular scheduled meeting (and AGM) to be held in Dunedin on the 28th November 2024. This falls after the statutory date required to agree on a New Zealand Council appointee.

It is proposed to hold a quick in person meeting on the 31st October 2024, 3pm, at the Roxburgh Information Centre.

Draft agenda:

- Election of Chair
- Election of NZC appointee
- Agree to hold over all other appointments (Deputy Chair, Executive Committee to AGM or planning meeting).
- Adoption of meeting schedule, and feedback on NZC meeting schedule.
- Introduction to Council presentation (staff, resources, agendas, administration, governance). This to be confirmed.

Recommendations

- 1. Agree to hold an inaugural meeting of Council at 3pm, 31st October at Roxburgh.**
- 2. Hold over further Council appointments until the AGM meeting at the earliest.**

Ian Hadland
Returning Officer & Chief Executive
Sept 2024

7.2 Legislative Compliance 2023-24 Financial Year

Introduction

Council adopted a Legislative Compliance Schedule in August 2015 (see below) and continues to update this as significant legislation impacting on the organisation is adopted. The purpose of this schedule is to provide a framework for reporting on legislative compliance across relevant Acts and Regulations.

Changes in legislation

Compliance with Resource Management Act (RMA)

The Council holds RMA resource consents (water permits to dam, take and discharge water) for its Takitakitoa wetland. Staff report annually to the Otago Regional Council as per the consent conditions. A copy of that report was in the May 2024 meeting agenda. There have been no serious compliance issues raised to date.

Holidays Act , Parental Leave, PAYE thresholds and minimum pay changes

The Councils payroll package Xero automatically adjusts for these changes as they come into effect. The living wage also rose and that is the minimum that the Council pays any employee, including its students

Amendments to Employment Relations Act

90 day trial periods are back. No staff are impacted by this, but we will add the provision to new contracts when recruiting staff.

Additional legislation added

Financial Reporting Act 2013 – The Councils status has changed in April 2024 due to a change to the thresholds for reporting standards. The Council now needs to only comply with Tier 3 which is less onerous than the Tier 2 for public entities.

Legislative Compliance Statement

In my opinion the Council has been compliant with its legal obligations under the Acts and Regulations listed.

Recommendation

That Council notes that the Council currently complies with the relevant legislation described below.

Ian Hadland
Chief Executive
16th September 2024

OTAGO FISH AND GAME COUNCIL - LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE SCHEDULE			
The Council has to comply with all relevant legislation. This schedule includes the main Acts and Regulations relating to Fish and Game Council activities but is not exhaustive.			
Act or Regulations	Key provisions	Comments	Responsibility
Conservation Act 1987	S 17 s26 R, s26S s26T, s26X s26ZD, s40 (1) (5)	Council responsible for: preparation of Fish and Game Plan; compliance with Conservation Act and Wildlife Act, regulations and gazette notice conditions; preparation of Anglers Notices; appointment of staff; production of annual report; holding at least 6 meeting PA.	Chief Executive
- Fish and Game Council Election Regulations 1990	Regulation 3, 20, 26	Council responsible for: appointing a returning officer; returning officer responsible for preparing rolls and conducting elections. Council responsible for meeting post election and appointment of NZ Council member	Council Chief Executive
Crown Entities Act 2004	S150 (3)	Annual Report presented to Parliament	Chief Executive
Criminal Procedure Act 2011		Sets out prosecution processes and procedures	Operations Manager
Evidence Act		Processes and requirements relating to prosecution processes, preparation and admissibility of evidence	Operations Manager
Public Finance Act 1989	S 43, Part 5, subpart 2, Schedule 4	Council responsible for preparation of annual report including financial statements and statement of service performance	Chief Executive Administration Officer Accountant

Public Audit Act 2001	S4	Council defined as a public entity	
Wildlife Act 1953 - Wildlife Regulations	s15, s39 (1), s44, s53, s54 Parts 2 and 3	Council responsible for: annual game season recommendations; day to day management of Wildlife Management Reserves under delegation from the Minister [Inch Clutha, Little Hoopers Inlet, Styx Basin]; exercise any written authority from the DG for taking or killing of game	Chief Executive Fish and Game Officers Rangers
Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act	Parts 2 and 7	Council responsible for conduct of meetings in accordance with Act and responses to OIA requests	Council Chief Executive
Resource Management Act 1991	Parts 3 and 6	Council responsible for compliance with the Act in terms of buildings, structures and land and water use.	Chief Executive
Employment Relations Act 2000 huma		Amended 2018 for clarity around meal breaks and 90 day trials. Further amended in 2022 to provide for 10 days sick leave.	Council (CE) Chief Executive (staff)
Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987	Parts 1 and 2	Employment contract obligations in respect of parental leave. Parental leave extended to 26 weeks in 2020	Council (CE) Chief Executive (staff)
State Sector Act 1988	s 56, s58	Council responsible for being a good employer	Council (CE) Chief Executive (staff)
Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992	Part 2	Council responsible for taking all practicable steps to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and maintain a safe working environment for employees • Ensure employees are not exposed to hazards while at work 	Chief Executive Council

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop emergency procedures • Ensure employees are trained and supervised • Provide employees with information on hazards • Record, report and investigate accidents • Systematically identify and assess hazards • Control significant hazards 	
Maritime Transport Act 1994	Part 2	Council responsible for boat certification and safe use by staff	Operations Manager
Privacy Act 2020		Council responsible for appropriate handling of personal information notably licenceholder data; compliance reports; mail lists. CE appointed as 'Privacy Officer' in 2021	Chief Executive Administration Officer
Human Rights Act 1993		Council responsible for compliance with human rights obligations under the Act	Chief Executive Compliance Coordinator
Protected Disclosures Act 2000		Council responsible for compliance with obligations under the Act	Chief Executive
Search and Surveillance Act	S3, Part 4, s169 (2) (3), s171, s172`	Council responsible for compliance with obligations under the Act including annual reporting on exercise of surveillance powers during ranging.	Rangers and F&G and staff. Chief Executive
Holidays Act 2003		Employment contract obligations in respect of annual leave and public holidays. Changes proposed next year	Administration Officer Chief Executive
Crown Entities Act 2004	s25	Council responsible for exercise of its powers and performance of functions under the Act and other Acts	Chief Executive Council

Income Tax Act 2007	Parts CX and RD	Council responsible for FBT returns and PAYE deductions and returns	Administration Officer Chief Executive
Goods and Services Tax Act 1985	Parts 2 and 3	Council responsible for GST payments, deductions and returns	Administration Officer Chief Executive
KiwiSaver Act 2006	Parts 2 and 3	Council responsible for enrolment of staff in Kiwisaver	Administration Officer Chief Executive
Financial Reporting Act 2013	Part 2	Council is responsible to ensure it meets the requirements of Teir 3 reporting standards for public entities	Council Chair/CE

8.0 Public Excluded Items

- 8.1 Draft OF&GC Minutes Public Excluded meeting 25th July 2024**
- 8.2 Communications and Engagement Implementation Plan Report**
- 8.3 Potential Wetland Project**
- 8.4 Property Update**
- 8.5 Regional Policy Statement Proceedings Update**
- 8.6 QLDC Bullock Creek Stormwater Easement Agreement**

9.0 Financial Report

Draft Finance and Licence Sales 31st August 2024

9.1 *Finance Reports*

The DRAFT financial Profit and Loss report and Balance sheet for the period from 1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024 are below. The full report for the end of financial year is with the accountants and is yet to be audited. The final report will be presented to the November AGM meeting as part of the annual performance report.

Profit and Loss

Income

Licence Income

Total licence sales to 31st August is \$2,464,711 against annual budget of \$2,455,777 (100% of annual budget)

Fish licence revenue from the profit and loss statement 31st August 2024 totals \$2,094,494 (Fish sales \$2,052,245 + non resident revenue \$1,909 + Designated Water licence \$40,340) compared with \$1,993,497 for the same period of the 2022/23 season. Fish licence revenue is ahead of 2022/23 by \$100,997.

These figures include both resident and non resident sales.

The budget for fish licence sales is \$2,077,401 (sales are at 100.1%)

The makeup of fish licence income was different this season as the new designated waters licence system charges for selected waters.

DWLR and DWLN relate to resident and non resident designated water licences (DWL) sold in Otago, some are for other regions. The funds for these have been return to NZC to be allocated to the appropriate regions \$2,117.32 (GST excl) from Otago Region.

Other regions have sold our DWL to the value of \$3,636.78 (GST excl). This has been refunded to Otago.

Central South Island Fish and Game and North Canterbury Fish and Game's Councils have the Salmon Endorsement Project. We have sold 512 Salmon endorsements with a value of \$2,113.04 (GST excl) this has been returned to them.

Game licence revenue from the Profit and Loss statement for the 2023/24 season recorded to 31st August 2024 total \$370,217 compared with \$354,010 for the 2022/23 season to August 2023. Figures exclude GST and commission to agents.

Game licence revenue is ahead of 2022/23 by \$16,207.

A full adult licence had an increase of \$6 per licence from the previous year. We sold less licences but had more revenue than 2022/23.

The 2023/24 budget for game licence sales is \$378,376 (sales are at 98%) exclusive of GST.

Other Income

Total other income year to 31st August is \$748,544

Areas of interest are:

- Wages Reimbursement is for work done for other regions. This includes assistance with CSIF&GC irrigation fish salvage and RMA assistance to NCF&GC.
- Contact Energy income is invoiced for project work as it is done.
- Interest is over budget as interest rates are higher than expected.
- Fine money from court cases that drip feed through the year.
- Rent Received is below budget as the budget was made when we had the Cromwell section leased out, and tenants in the Dunedin office.
- RMA costs Reimbursed is NZC payment towards Regional Policy Statement work.
- Other income is very high as we have the profit on sale of fixed assets that included the sale of the Chardonnay Street property in Cromwell and the Dunedin office. The accountants have sorted this to reserves.

Donations and Grants (not in budget)

Donation/Grant from	For	Amount GST excl
Bayfield High School	TAKF Lures	\$50
Otago Community Trust	TAKF	\$1,879
RICHO	Taiktaiktoa Wetland	\$1,000
Otago Regional Council Eco Fund	Bendigo Wetland	\$5,000
Clutha Fisheries Trust	Bendigo Wetland	\$15,000
Total		\$22,929

Expenses

Expenditure at the 31st August for the 2023/24 financial year is \$2,749,012 against an annual budget of \$2,716,025. Expenditure at 101%.

The main reasons for any variances are:

- Species Management – Game harvest surveys were more expensive than budgeted. Hatchery operations are negative as the stock take value has been added and is much greater than last year. The hatchery operations expenses were \$5,853. Less than budget as we are awaiting a large fish food delivery. Game bird control complaints has no budget but has unexpected expense from laboratory analysis of dead birds from Wanaka costs.
- Habitat Protection – this includes \$50,492 of unbudgeted Contact Sports Management Plan spending, this has been charged to Contact Energy Ltd. RMA spending includes that claimed from NZC for Regional Policy Statement work. Works Management spending on wetland plant guards, stakes, soil, maimais and maintenance to the Wanaka grounds.

Habitat Enhancement and Research Fund - Grants come from a reserve, funded from diversion payments.

- Participation – Designated Waters signage, surveys and monitoring has a budget in place, OF&G fishing training events are complete.
Training events and club relations look overspent but we had a grant of \$1,879 from Otago Community Trust towards Take A Kid Fishing events.
- Public interface. Active with hunting and fishing reports and social media.
The communications strategy project has more plans. Statutory advocacy and media releases have been busy but use more time than expenses.
- Compliance- one difficult prosecution included. More ranger training occurred in September missing this budget.
- Licencing – Designated Waters (DW) IT Build – Otago Region’s contribution to designing and implementing the DWL system and data base. Finished.
Commission is made up from agent sales commission and bank fees associated with online sales.
- Council expenses – Election expense was on work hours. Six meetings accounted for. February planning meeting two days includes accommodation and food.
- Planning and Reporting – All expenses from accountant for the auditor in. Inter council meetings on zoom so less expenses.
- Over Heads/Administration
Salaries, less casual work than planned and one less staff member at the end of the year. A big year on staff training, clothing and expenses. Employment expenses relate to changes in staff.
Office premises – We ceased to rent the Cromwell building that was budgeted for, An assessment was done on building insurance and it is much higher than budget.
Office Equipment – new fridge extra and new rental of eftpos machine added to costs.
General expenses – unexpected legal cost for Wanaka Hatchery/Bullock Creek \$11,689.
- Approved Reserves Expenses - \$43,052. This is expenditure approved by the council for the Bendigo, Bullock Creek and Historical and RMA Reserves. Not including property transactions.
- Depreciation – Depreciation year to date is \$56,784.
- Levies – paid monthly as per budget. \$1,161,958 excl GST.
- University Research Grant – Dr Donald Scott \$5000 has been paid from the non-resident reserve as agreed by Council.

The DRAFT profit and loss for the 12 months ended 31st August 2024 shows a surplus of \$464,244. This is not a true surplus as \$475,879.75 is from Depreciation recovered from the building sale.

Debtors

No doubtful debts from agents.

No doubtful debts in the general accounts

Balance Sheet

Bank Funds Position at 31st August 2024

Bank	Value
ANZ 00 Account	\$ 1,433,587.53
ANZ 70 Account	\$ 229,540.39
ASB Account	\$ 75.57
Cash On Hand	\$ 50.00
Total	\$ 1,663,253.49

Term Investments as at 31st August 2024

Investment Bank	Amount	Rate	Maturity
ANZ 1002	\$200,000.00	6.10%	20 th Sept 2024
ASB 81	\$206,083.29	5.95%	2 nd Feb 2025
Total	\$406,083.29		

Two new term deposits have been started on the 10th September 2024:

\$500,00 in ANZ 9 months at 5.55%

\$500,00 in ASB 1 year at 5.40%

Fixed Assets and Capital Expenditure

The asset replacement fund has gone from \$95,161 to \$37,190 with upgrading one truck, one boat, a defibrillator, one new laptop and Cromwell car charger.

Property sales and purchases are not part of the asset replacement fund.

The Dunedin office building has been sold, allowing the purchase of a cleared site in North Taieri Mosgiel, a new set of offices and garaging space will be built.

Otago Fish and Game Council will lease back the previously owned building in Dunedin until the new build is available.

Liabilities

Total Liabilities at 31st August are \$403,996.

- Other payables include visa card spending, accrued accounting and audit fee expenses and income in advance.
- Employee Entitlements includes \$80,250 of outstanding staff annual leave and one fortnights pays brought back into this year.
- Designated Waters liabilities are money owed to other regions for licences relating to their region but sold in Otago. This has been returned.

New Zealand Fish and Game Council Legal Fund Grant – Paid as Required

Agreed by the NZC June 2024

	Allocated	Used	Remaining
Regional Policy Statement NZC Legal Fund	\$37,500	\$16,990.30	\$20,509.00

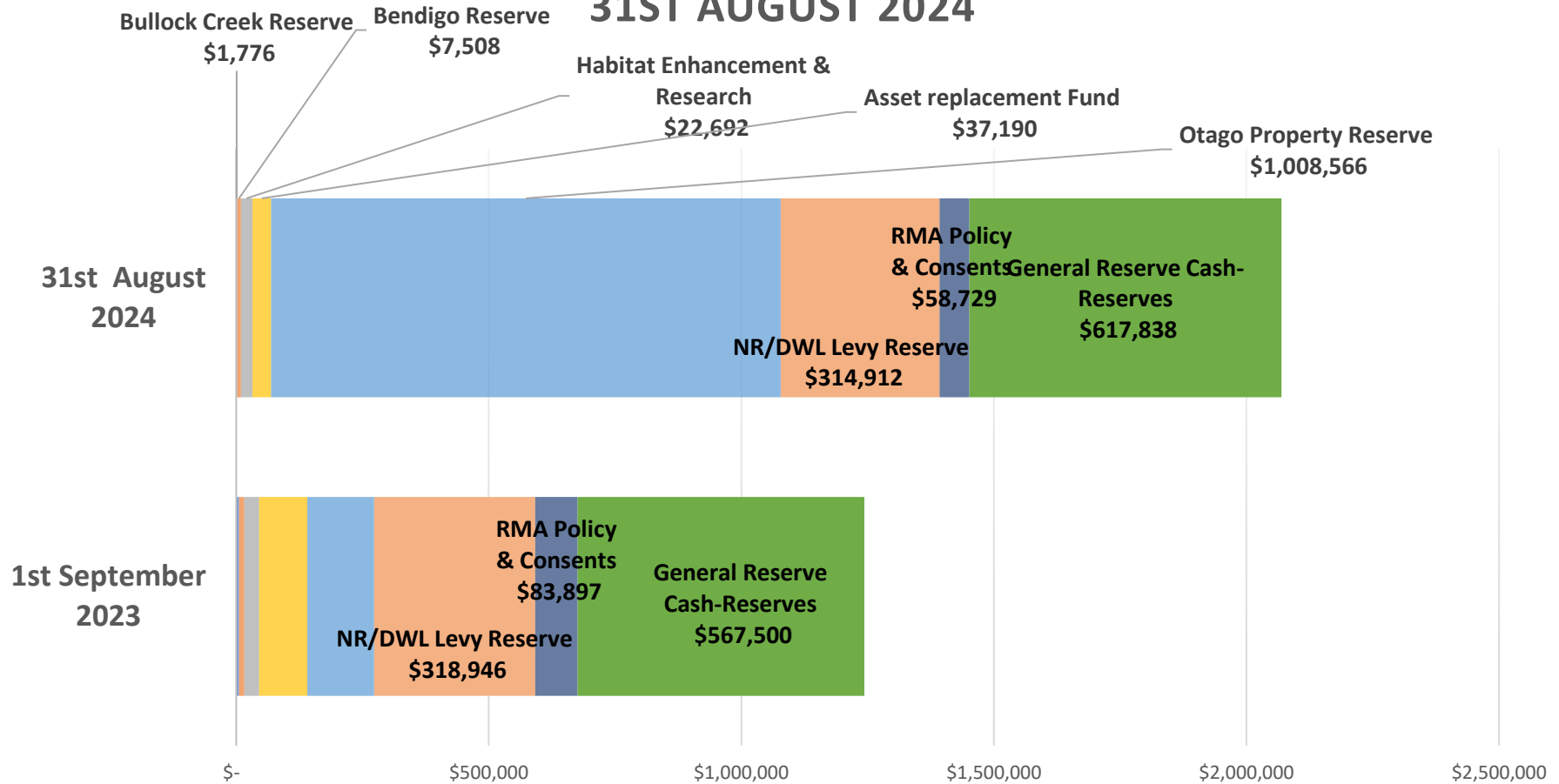
Otago Fish and Game Council Meeting 26th September 2024

Equity**Otago Fish and Game Reserves 31st August 2024**

Otago Reserves Movements	Balance August 2023	Income (To) Reserve	Note	Outgoing (From) Reserve	Balance August 2024
Back Country Non-resident Levy	\$318,946	\$42,249	1	\$46,283	\$314,912
Habitat Enhancement & Research	\$29,502	\$15,100	2	\$21,910	\$22,692
Bullock Creek Reserve	\$5,437	\$3,500	3	\$7,161	\$1,776
Bendigo Reserve	\$10,592	\$5,000	8	\$8,084	\$7,508
Priority Consents Reserve	\$41,697	\$0.0	7	\$7,507	\$34,190
Otago Property Reserves	\$132,341	TBC	4	TBC	\$1,008,566
Regional Policy Statement Reserve	\$11,124	\$0.0	5	\$11,124	\$0
Priority Plan Changes	\$31,076	\$0.0	6	\$6,537	\$24,539
Total	\$580,715				\$1,414,183

- Note 1 Income is from late 2022/23 season non resident fishing licence and 2023/24 season designated water licence sales. \$5000 a year for five years is to be taken from this fund for the Dr Donald Scott University Fund. Agreed by Council May 2021. 2023/24 is year three. \$25,000 for 2023/24 for implementation of the Designated Waters set up and monitoring. Agreed in NZC and Council Reserve Budgets
- Note 2 Balance is \$22,692. Less committed but not yet paid out of \$4,000 so balance of \$18,692 available for dispersal by way of grants.
- Note 3 Bullock Creek council approved OF&GC HEF funding February 2024 \$3,500.
- Note 4 Otago Property Reserve – Funds from historical and recent property sales, dedicated to acquiring and maintaining land and building assets in Otago. Figures not yet available from accountant. Total is final.
- Note 5 OF&GC agreed to \$60,000 May 2020. NZC notified.
- Note 6 OF&GC agreed to \$120,000 May 2020. NZC notified. \$81,000 agreed to be spent by council September 2020. This reserve is not required now and has been agreed by council (May 2024) to be used by Regional Policy Statement.
- Note 7 OF&GC agreed to \$60,000 May 2020. NZC notified. This reserve is not required now and has been agreed by council (May 2024) to be used on Regional Policy Statement work.
- Note 8 Bendigo May 2022 \$3,414 and March 2023 \$3,000 council agreed to Habitat Enhancement funds for Bendigo. ORC Eco Fund \$5,000 June 2024

DRAFT MOVEMENT IN RESERVES FROM 1ST SEPTEMBER 2023 TO 31ST AUGUST 2024



Balance Sheet

Otago Fish and Game Council

As at 31 August 2024

	31 AUG 2024	31 AUG 2023
Assets		
Current Assets		
Bank	1,663,253	324,402
Receivables		
Accounts Receivable	202,738	159,885
Prepayments and Accrued Income	-	12,332
Total Receivables	202,738	172,216
GST	32,453	22,038
Investments	406,083	916,442
Inventory	27,710	15,599
Accrued Interest	6,523	17,017
Total Current Assets	2,338,761	1,467,714
Fixed Assets		
Property Plant & Equipment	1,701,247	1,329,054
Land & Building - Hazlett Road Mosgiel	423,113	-
Total Fixed Assets	2,124,360	1,329,054
Total Assets	4,463,121	2,796,768
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	80,085	77,178
Other Payables	243,661	253,200
Employee Entitlements	80,250	73,980
Designated Waters other regions	-	-
Total Current Liabilities	403,996	404,359
Total Liabilities	403,996	404,359
Net Assets	4,059,125	2,392,410
Equity		
Accumulated Funds		
Accumulated Funds	1,548,016	1,622,094
Current Year Earnings	464,244	(74,078)
Transfer (To)/From Reserves	580,493	172,028
Total Accumulated Funds	2,592,752	1,720,043
Dedicated Reserves		
Non Resident Levy Reserve	314,913	318,946
Habitat Enhancement & Research	22,692	29,502
Priority Plan Changes Reserve	24,539	31,076
Priority Consents Reserve	34,190	41,697
Regional Policy Statement Reserve	-	11,124

Profit and Loss

Otago Fish and Game Council For the year ended 31 August 2024

	JUL 2024	AUG 2024	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
Income								
Licence Sales								
Fish Licence Sales	12,380	(136,745)	2,052,245	2,077,401	(25,156)	99%	2,077,401	1,888,362
Non-Resident Licence Revenue	-	-	1,909	-	1,909	-	-	105,135
Designated Water Licence Sales	-	-	40,340	-	40,340	-	-	-
Game Licence Sales	550	987	370,217	378,376	(8,159)	98%	378,376	354,010
Total Licence Sales	12,930	(135,758)	2,464,711	2,455,777	8,934	100%	2,455,777	2,347,507
Other Income								
Wages Reimbursement	-	3,260	15,743	-	15,743	-	-	14,941
Contact Energy Mitigation Income	-	47,092	90,868	-	90,868	-	-	68,972
Interest Income	2,528	14,518	59,739	56,757	2,982	105%	56,757	52,630
Fines - Fishing & Game Offences	-	-	2,700	500	2,200	540%	500	798
Rent Received	3,104	3,800	45,207	63,849	(18,642)	71%	63,849	53,747
Fishing Competitions	-	-	1,119	-	1,119	-	-	1,544
Profit on Sale of Fixed Assets	-	(169,364)	475,880	-	475,880	-	-	8,144
Donations & Grants	-	15,000	22,929	-	22,929	-	-	28,823
Merchandise Sales/Other	-	2,881	42	-	42	-	-	87
RMA Costs Reimbursed	828	14,567	16,990	-	16,990	-	-	60,000
Sundry Income	-	217	2,227	-	2,227	-	-	413
Diversion - Habitat Enhancement and Research Fund	-	-	15,100	-	15,100	-	-	18,460
Total Other Income	6,460	(68,029)	748,544	121,106	627,438	618%	121,106	308,559
Total Income	19,391	(203,787)	3,213,255	2,576,883	636,372	125%	2,576,883	2,656,066

Profit and Loss

	JUL 2024	AUG 2024	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
Gross Profit	19,391	(203,787)	3,213,255	2,576,883	636,372	125%	2,576,883	2,656,066
Expenses								
Species Management								
Population Monitoring	-	-	9,311	13,000	(3,689)	72%	13,000	49,063
Monitor key fisheries/Research Liaison	-	-	-	1,000	(1,000)	-	1,000	-
Harvest Assessment	-	4,200	4,200	3,500	700	120%	3,500	3,500
Hatchery Operations	-	(25,018)	(6,597)	9,000	(15,597)	-73%	9,000	14,731
Releases	-	90	951	1,000	(49)	95%	1,000	625
Game Bird Control compliants	-	2,188	2,241	-	2,241	-	-	444
Total Species Management	-	(18,540)	10,106	27,500	(17,394)	37%	27,500	68,363
Habitat Protection & Mngt								
Contact Sports Fish Management Plan	10,090	3,583	50,492	-	50,492	-	-	44,017
Resource Mngt Act	828	14,567	17,970	1,000	16,970	1,797%	1,000	64,042
Works & Management	-	-	9,846	12,500	(2,654)	79%	12,500	1,574
Habitat Enhancement Research Fund Grants	-	-	21,649	-	21,649	-	-	2,870
Total Habitat Protection & Mngt	10,918	18,150	99,957	13,500	86,457	740%	13,500	112,503
Participation								
Access and Signage	159	128	1,061	2,500	(1,439)	42%	2,500	2,499
Back Country Surveys/Monitoring	-	-	20,259	25,000	(4,741)	81%	25,000	116
Promotion Articles and Advertising	-	-	241	500	(259)	48%	500	-
Publications and Web Site	-	-	924	-	924	-	-	4,430
OF&G Training Events	470	348	3,020	2,000	1,020	151%	2,000	2,300
Club Relations and Grants	-	940	1,650	1,000	650	165%	1,000	1,083
Wetland Reserve Ballots	-	-	22	-	22	-	-	-

Profit and Loss

	JUL 2024	AUG 2024	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
F&G Advocacy at Popular Fisheries	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,026
Total Participation	628	1,416	27,177	31,000	(3,823)	88%	31,000	25,453
PUBLIC INTERFACE								
Liaison								
Liaison DoC Unin Govt CFT IWI	-	-	41	1,000	(959)	4%	1,000	765
Total Liaison	-	-	41	1,000	(959)	4%	1,000	765
Communication								
World Wetlands	-	-	27	500	(473)	5%	500	54
Total Communication	-	-	27	500	(473)	5%	500	54
Media Releases								
Advocacy Statutory	-	-	-	500	(500)	-	500	-
Weekly Fishing Reports/ social media	-	-	4,375	4,500	(125)	97%	4,500	2,940
Communications Strategy	-	3,150	15,398	24,000	(8,602)	64%	24,000	14,520
Media Release	-	-	-	500	(500)	-	500	400
Total Media Releases	-	3,150	19,773	29,500	(9,727)	67%	29,500	17,860
Total PUBLIC INTERFACE	-	3,150	19,841	31,000	(11,159)	64%	31,000	18,679
COMPLIANCE								
Ranger Training and Expenses	-	-	2,828	5,500	(2,672)	51%	5,500	5,941
Compliance	-	-	8,250	5,000	3,250	165%	5,000	6,649
Total COMPLIANCE	-	-	11,078	10,500	578	106%	10,500	12,590
LICENCING								
Designated Waters IT Build	-	-	21,023	31,819	(10,796)	66%	31,819	-
Agent Servicing	-	-	252	500	(248)	50%	500	172
Commission/Fees	560	3,066	89,251	110,510	(21,259)	81%	110,510	86,914
Total LICENCING	560	3,066	110,525	142,829	(32,304)	77%	142,829	87,087

Profit and Loss

	JUL 2024	AUG 2024	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
COUNCIL								
Elections Council	-	-	-	250	(250)	-	250	-
Council Meetings and Agendas	1,469	(130)	14,103	15,000	(897)	94%	15,000	12,462
Total COUNCIL	1,469	(130)	14,103	15,250	(1,147)	92%	15,250	12,462
PLANNING & REPORTING								
Reporting/Audit	-	15,483	15,856	16,000	(144)	99%	16,000	17,049
National Liason	43	-	266	500	(234)	53%	500	630
Total PLANNING & REPORTING	43	15,483	16,121	16,500	(379)	98%	16,500	17,679
ADMINISTRATION								
Salaries	71,628	111,383	941,864	987,058	(45,194)	95%	987,058	808,170
Staff Expenses								
ACC Levy	1,931	-	1,931	2,000	(69)	97%	2,000	2,160
Fringe Benefit Tax	-	2,405	6,156	6,500	(344)	95%	6,500	7,217
Staff Training	1,157	1,141	6,765	6,000	765	113%	6,000	16,619
Staff Clothing Branded	-	-	1,358	-	1,358	-	-	572
Staff Personal Expenses	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Staff Expenses	1,272	2,484	9,120	8,000	1,120	114%	8,000	9,438
Staff Employment Expenses	31	5,166	5,257	2,000	3,257	263%	2,000	683
Employee Assistance	-	16,000	16,000	-	16,000	-	-	-
Total Staff Expenses	4,391	27,197	46,587	24,500	22,087	190%	24,500	36,689
Office Premices	5,493	7,091	91,806	115,899	(24,093)	79%	115,899	114,681
Office Equipemnt	1,041	85	3,463	2,500	963	139%	2,500	1,119
Communications	1,186	1,200	19,740	20,700	(960)	95%	20,700	23,017
General Exp (incl Insurance)	62	39	14,350	4,600	9,750	312%	4,600	2,720
General Field Equipment	-	134	2,769	3,300	(531)	84%	3,300	2,572

Profit and Loss

	JUL 2024	AUG 2024	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
Vehicles	2,309	2,564	51,560	54,000	(2,440)	95%	54,000	60,078
Total ADMINISTRATION	86,109	149,694	1,172,139	1,212,557	(40,418)	97%	1,212,557	1,049,047
Approved Reserve Expense	4,213	1,429	43,052	-	43,052	-	-	61,697
Depreciation	5,110	5,110	56,784	53,431	3,353	106%	53,431	59,502
Loss on Disposal	-	487	1,169	-	1,169	-	-	-
NZ Fish & Game Levies	96,830	96,830	1,161,958	1,161,958	-	100%	1,161,958	1,200,082
University of Otago Research Grant	-	-	5,000	-	5,000	-	-	5,000
Total Expenses	205,880	276,143	2,749,012	2,716,025	32,987	101%	2,716,025	2,730,144
Net Profit	(186,489)	(479,929)	464,244	(139,142)	603,386	-334%	(139,142)	(74,078)

9.3 Licence Sales

Fish Licence Sales 2023/24 Season to 31st August 2024

See table following for fish licence sales numbers and categories for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 season sales to the end of August of the season.

Our previous Back Country Waters are now Designated Waters. Designated Waters are charged out at \$5 per region for the season for residents and \$40 a day for Non Residents (with a limit of 5 per region)

Note that DWLR and DWLN relate to resident and non resident designated water licences (DWL) sold in Otago, some are for other regions.

The designated water divisions will continue for the 2024/25 Season at the same price.

In summary, 2023/24 fishing licence sales, in whole season licence equivalents (LEQs) 15,439 LEQs compared with 14,871 LEQs to the 30th of June of the season. 568 LEQs ahead of last year.

Fish Licence Sales 2024/25

Fish licence sales for the 2024/25 Season were delayed. Sales began on 22nd July 2024 for both online and in agencies. Prices have increased for each category and there are no category changes. We will report on progress at the November meeting.

Game Licence Sales to the 31st August of the Season

The Gamebird licence sales began online and at agencies on the 14th of March 2024.

See table following for game licence sales categories and numbers at 31st August of both 2023 and 2024 seasons. This shows the full seasons.

In summary, game licence sales in whole season licence equivalents are 3,940 LEQs for the 2024 season compared with 3,988 LEQs for the 2023 season. 48 LEQs behind last season.

9.4 Recommendations

- 1. That the Finance report and Licence Report to the 31st August 2024 be received.**
- 2. Council adopt the draft set of accounts for audit**

**Sharon Milne
Administration Officer
18/09/2024**

Otago Region Fish Licence Sales 2022/23 and 2023/24 Season to the 31st August of the Season

One Month short of a full season

2023/24																					
Sales	FWFA	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FWIA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWNC	FDNC	SRSE	DWLR	DWLN	Total	Fish LEQ
Public	1939	2392	601	375	365	173	42	451	2918	2591	594	48	459	166	26	100	0	1531	644	17463	8,126
Agency	2074	2955	217	755	153	106	19	171	582	830	393	14	76	57	12	48	512	1397	138	10522	7,313
Total	4013	5347	818	1130	518	279	61	622	3500	3421	987	62	535	223	38	148	512	2928	782	27985	15,439

2022/23																					
Sales	FWFA	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FWIA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWNC	FDNC	SRSE	DWLR	DWLN	Total	Fish LEQ
Public	2114	2363	541	363	398	239	34	395	2771	2134	544	46	399	96	17	54	0	0	0	14317	7,493
Agency	2192	3062	206	698	156	143	20	160	734	1178	394	28	91	89	11	24	626	0	0	9827	7,378
Total	4306	5425	747	1061	554	382	54	555	3505	3312	938	74	490	185	28	78	626	0	0	24144	14,871

FWFA (Family), FWA (Adult season), FWNA (Non Resident season), FSLA (Senior Loyal), FLAA (Local Area), FWIA (Adult Winter)
 FLBA (long Break), FSBA (Short Break), FDA (Adult Day), FDNA (Non Resident Adult Day), FWJ (Junior Season)
 FWNJ (Junior non resident season), FDJ (Junior Day), FDNJ (Non Resident Junior Day), FWNC (non Resident Child season)
 FDNC(Non Resident child Day),SRSE (Salmon Endorsement),DWLR(Designated Waters Resident),DWLN(Designated Waters Non Res)
 Some of the DWLs sold are for other regions, and other regions have some of ours

Otago Region Game Licence Sales Full Season Comparison

2024							
Sales	GWA	GWJ	GWC	GDA	GDJ	Total	Game LEQ
Public	766	111	58	76	5	1016	803
Agency	3088	229	80	23	0	3420	3,137
Total	3854	340	138	99	5	4436	3,940

2023							
Sales	GWA	GWJ	GWC	GDA	GDJ	Total	Game LEQ
Public	790	88	47	65	2	992	820
Agency	3117	237	94	22	1	3471	3,168
Total	3907	325	141	87	3	4463	3,988

GWA Full Season Adult, GWJ Full season Junior, GWC Full season Child
GDA Adult Day, GDJ Junior Day

10.0 Chief Executives Report September 2024

10.1 SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Spawning Surveys

Rainbow spawning surveys are presently being undertaken in the southern Lakes tributaries.

Regulations

The Minister of Hunting and Fishing has replied to a letter from Southland Council on its proposed designated waters. The letter reiterates the need for a review of all Designated Waters. There has been no further movement on what a review might entail. His letter also insisted that Australian fishing guides to be treated the same as New Zealand fishing guides (they actually presently are in the absence of a guides licence)

The gamebird harvest report is attached and the additional questions asked of hunters make for interesting reading. Despite there being near record low numbers of birds about, most hunters still rated their opening weekend as a success.

10.2 HABITAT PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Contact Energy – Lower Clutha Sportsfish Management Plan Implementation

The annual report on Contact Energy funded sportsfish and habitat work in the Clutha River is attached in the staff reports to be noted. Its an interesting read with some great work completed by staff.

Staff have met with Mata Au/Clutha Sports Fish Trust to assist with their summer and autumn workplan items.

Regional Council Plans

There is a separate update in the public excluded agenda on the outcome of the High Court mediation for the Otago Regional Policy Statement.

Wetland Management

The Bendigo Wetland Management Plan is ready to be notified before the end of the month. Web ready material has been drafted as has an online response form. The submission period is two months. Until then, staff continue to replant a common use area with the help of local community groups. The site was also visited recently by ORC councillors.

10.3 USER PARTICIPATION

Publications

The F&G fishing edition of the magazine was distributed as planned. Staff have also been updating the angling access information and loading these online. This is an alternative to printing them.

Weekly River reports to anglers (via email) will resume this week and continue for the open season. That supports other electronic communications including month ezine Reel Life and regular Facebook posts.

Take a Kid Fishing and Adult Fishing Classes

Both series of events will be complete by the time of the meeting. There has been terrific demand for the introductory angling course this year, probably as a result of adverts in the magazine and a boosted profile on our Facebook page. Around 50 new entrants took part in the classes and practical session.

TAKF events at Southern Reservoir are fully subscribed and we hope the weather holds for both events. They are a high-profile event for the Council and it requires a near full staff turnout to make it work. Any help from Councillors would be appreciated!

10.4 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Communications Implementation plan

Thank you to Councillors who contributed to key messages. The outcome is a comprehensive list of tasks which should really lift the Council's profile. Additional resourcing will be required to execute the plan in the way described. (See item in public excluded)

Media

There was again good coverage in the ODT and in social media of our Take a Kid fishing events. Ex Councillor Murray Neilson's excellent opinion pieces on freshwater management and species interaction also deserve special mention here too.

Meeting attendance

Staff have been attending plenty of stakeholder meetings, including with catchment groups. Meetings have also been held with Friends of Bullock Creek and Wai Wanaka.

10.5 COMPLIANCE

Rangers

Ranger training was completed during the last period with all rangers given an update on the various project work of the Council. We have a small but dedicated team and they are supporting other work as well such as boat surveys and take a kid fishing events. Their warrants have been renewed for a further term of three years.

10.6 LICENCING

Due to higher than usual workload locally, the CE has stepped back from the National Licence Working Party. We will keep a watching brief on the licencing system and contribute where possible.

10.7 COUNCIL

Elections

Elections process is largely complete now that Otago doesn't need an election. Attention is turning to the first meeting of the new Council (see separate paper)

Joint Meeting with Southland

Southland Councillors joined our last meeting and it was a productive get together. There may be a need to record more substantial minutes in future so outcomes are clear. Staff (with the agreement of the councils) only recorded the action points for further tasks.

For discussion

10.8 PLANNING AND REPORTING

Annual Audit and Annual Report

The end of August was the end of the financial year and staff will now begin the annual reporting process. The Auditor has made contact and a schedule of tasks has been agreed. One of the earlier tasks is for the Council to adopt a draft set of accounts for audit. That is in the finance report within this agenda. As previously mentioned there is a new reporting standard required and we are expecting further detail on that shortly.

Staffing

The Operations Manager resigned from the Cromwell based role and that will be advertised shortly. A consultant has been used to assist with the redesign of the job description and advertising to ensure we attract the best possible candidates. I will present a staff structure to the special Council meeting to bring the new Councillors up to date.

Next Council Meeting

Just a reminder that the next full Council meeting is in Dunedin on 28th November 2024. The AGM will be held in the middle of that meeting as usual.

Recommendation

That this report be received

Ian Hadland

Chief Executive

September 2024

Reporting Against 3 Year Strategic Priorities 2023-2026 – August/September 2024

Goals	Activity this period
<p>Species & Habitat maintained and improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understand climate change impacts on critical habitat and species abundance and distribution. • Long-term monitoring programmes are established for sensitive sportsfish and gamebird species/populations • RMA/NBEA planning documents recognise fish and game bird values and protect and restore the habitats that they depend upon. 	<p>Report in this agenda providing a summary of climate change publications related to Otago sports fisheries and habitat. Still waiting on NZC research project on changes to trout distribution under several model.</p> <p>Salmon spawning report in this agenda. Angler surveys at Lake Hawea continue. Review of mallard monitoring methods due this financial year. Pukeko surveys also reported on in this agenda</p> <p>Mediation for Regional policy statement completed during reporting period. Land and Water Plan in limbo with Govt intervening in process at Otago Regional Council.</p>
<p>Strategic relationships and advocacy enhanced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and stakeholder perceptions (social licence) of Otago Fish & Game as a valid and respected organisation are improved. • Alliances are formed with like-minded bodies for mutual benefit. (eg Industry groups, Game Animal Council) • landowners see F&G Otago as a valuable partner organisation in habitat protection, species management, and in fostering access to those resources. • General public understand and value trout, salmon and game birds as public resource, and how angling and gamebird hunting contributes to community wellbeing, heritage and kiwi way of life. 	<p>Comm's Implementation plan ready for signoff this meeting. Further resources required for full implementation</p> <p>CE spoke at Otago Deerstalkers Assn. Staff (and Cr Highton) continue to attend catchment group meetings. CE now part of steering group for upper Lakes catchment action plan.</p> <p>Tiaki Maniototo invited to view Takitakitōa wetland. No date set yet.</p> <p>Planning underway for an MP's fishing day, Celebration of 20 Years of macraes hatchery, and 150th celebration of the first trout fishing season in Otago</p>
<p>Recruitment and retention of licence holders improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge of Otago F&G role and activity by licence holders results in improved perceptions of value for money in a licence. 	<p>NZC coordinated survey of licenceholders understanding of F&G out at present. Will review results and repeat locally if necessary</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to participation such as cost, regulation complexity, skill level and access are managed or reduced as far as possible. • Licence holders see tangible 'evidence of service' through regular communication from the organisation. 	<p>Regulation review, particularly the first schedule is becoming urgent. Two surveys have found regulation complexity a barrier to participation.</p> <p>Weekly river reports are being direct emailed to ~13,000 subscribers with a 49% open rate which is very good for online material. Communications implementation plan increases effort in this area</p>
<p>Tangata Whenua/Mana whenua engaged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iwi and Otago F&G aspirations agreed and shared to achieve greater protection of freshwater and wetland values through RMA/NBEA processes. • Enduring and meaningful partnership formed with tangata whenua. • Conservation Act Section 4 responsibilities (treaty responsibilities) are understood, acknowledged and met. 	<p>Environmental officer continues to foster the working relationship with Aukaha through regular meetings and contact.</p> <p>No action this period</p> <p>NZC has provided guidance on F&G responsibilities and information on implementation of its responsibilities.</p>

11.0 RMA Planning and Consents Report

No standard report available for August/September.

See Public Excluded agenda for Otago Regional Policy Statement litigation update

12.0 Committee & Delegate Reports

12.1 Clutha Fisheries Trust

12.2 Clutha Mata Au Sports Fish and Habitat Trust

12.3 Ngai Tahu

12.4 Conservation Board

12.5 NZC



29 August 2024

NZC CEO Update to Regional Managers

Summary of Fish & Game National Council Meeting #170 (23 & 24 August 2024)

Tēnā koutou,

Below, you'll find a summary of the topics and decisions from our latest NZC meeting. Hot button issues that were around future contestable funding rounds, development of a National Sportsfish and Gamebird Monitoring Program, and the NZC risk register. I encourage you to review the summary closely.

Executive Overview:

August hui

The August meeting of the NZC was the last before the upcoming elections and we farewelled two councillors who have decided not to stand again, Dean Phibbs and Dave Harris. They have both contributed significantly and we will wish them well.

The meeting, held in Wellington, had a typically full agenda and I highlight a few areas of focus below.

Annual Meeting and Budget Timetable, and Contestable Funding Process:

The Annual Meeting and Budget Timetable was approved. It was explained the timetable was based around meeting the production schedule for licence setting and other regulatory work. In considering the NZC meetings the Council shared views on how challenging it was to meet online or just for a single day.

The timetable is attached for formal consultation. It has been amended in line with the Council's decisions.

Please provide feedback by November 29 2024.

It was also agreed in-person managers' meeting/s are at the discretion of the CE within the budget provided. However, the Council also directed that they did not

New Zealand Council STATUTORY MANAGERS OF FRESHWATER SPORTS FISH, GAME BIRDS & THEIR HABITATS
 Level 1, Unit 2, 166 Featherston St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 25-055, Wellington 6146, New Zealand
 Phone 04 499 4767 | Email nzcouncil@fishandgame.org.nz | fishandgame.org.nz

Recentre, Rebalance, Rewild.

require an in-person managers' meeting to be held to advise NZC ahead of its budget meeting/s.

In considering the annual meeting and budget timetable the Council discussed the process for the budgeting meeting. The report highlighted the involvement of managers in contestable funding applications in the past. The Council considered that advice and modified the report and the motion in the agenda.

The update to the report was that the following note be added after para 21 on pg47: *"Managers have no statutory role to advise NZC on the process. The process that has been established, to workshop, and then advise NZC on budgets has no foundation in legislation."*

The NZC resolved that there will no longer be a Contestable Fund budget round. Instead NZC, on an annual basis, will be taking a zero-based budget approach, whereby the entire budget of a region, will be reviewed annually, and in setting both Licence Fees recommendations, and organisational budgets moving forward.

The NZC also discussed levies and resolved that using regional reserves is lawful and NZC will consider levying regional reserves as part of this process. The legal advice behind this decision was considered in another item of the agenda and is attached for your information.

We appreciate this is a significant change in the process. The NZC staff will be engaging with appropriate experts to formulate a paper for the NZC December meeting considering how to implement this new process and how to support the regions through this change.

National budget approval

The Council approved the Total National Budget for 2024-25 of \$13,255,721 across all Regions and the NZC/National Budget. The Forecast Deficit for the year is \$532,417. We have attached separately the 2024-25 budget confirmation paper 26 August 2024.

Budget and workplan approval NZC/National

The Council received the information and approved the rollover and reallocation of \$207,500 unused 2023-24 budget to the 2024-25 financial year. It also approved the Financial NZC/National Budget Deficit of \$257,431 for 2024-25.

NZC delegated to the Chief Executive the authority to spend within the Budget approved for the 2024-25 year.

The Council adopted the NZC workplan with an amendment to be clear about which Ministerial Review recommendations we are implementing and which recommendations are outside of our control.

Risk Register

I presented a risk register and discussion document to the NZC covering risks to the entire organisation and NZC office.

The discussion highlighted the importance of the risk register and what mitigations are in place.

Issues raised included potentially impactful external risks such as High Pathogenic Avian Influenza and challenges with culture and internal cohesion. The structure of the organisation, lack of cohesion and issues with lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities were highlighted.

A clarification was offered after some commentary that the full-time equivalent staff for NZC was the same as at 2018, with 7.6 staff. In 2019 there was an overlap with new staffer Jack Kos commencing and Robert Sowman staying on so numbers were 8.4 for a year.

The NZC adopted the risk register with amendments, with an action that this be sent to regions with the suggestion that the regions supply their risk register back to NZC. The updated risk register is attached.

Rationale of HS System

The Council agreed for a continued review of Health & Safety and Wellbeing policies and delegated to the Chief Executive the authority to review and provide proposals for recommended changes.

The information was discussed with the Health and Safety committee who provided input prior to the hui.

The Council also resolved that all new councillors are inducted into health and safety requirements.

This will require the development of a health and safety induction programme.

The accountability matrix is attached.

RMA Fund Update

There were no new applications to consider. The current allocated funds in the RMA budget are \$722,276 on 21 July 2024.

The remaining budget is \$72,772. This does not include contestable funds for next year of \$200,000 which was confirmed in the budgets in July.

NZC confirmed RMA fund decisions:

- a) Fund 50% of \$35,000 for the joint North Canterbury / Central South Island and Southland Fish and Game High Court Case (as noted in minutes from meeting 169).
- b) Fund 50% of the \$75,000 costs for joint Otago / CSI Fish and Game application for funding (as discussed in 4 June NZC workshop).

Sports Fish and Game Management Plan Policies and Guidance

The Council agreed to adopt the SFGMP consultation guidelines, draft elements SFGMPs and guide to drafting SFGMPs as NZC policy, which is binding on the regions (26C(1)(a),(j) and 26Q (1)(e)(v)). It adopted the mana whenua engagement SFGMP work as guidance.

The SFGMP supporting documents have been through a comprehensive development process including engagement with the Department of Conservation. Fish & Game managers/CEs are Fish & Game's RMA experts.

The draft SFGMP documents were discussed with managers at the 21 September 2023 Managers' Meeting. Managers generally wanted the SFGMP to be briefer and adhere to the minimum requirements of the Conservation Act.

Managers were also concerned about incorporating spawning sites as part of the SFGMP as this was seen not to have the flexibility needed to update records and mapping. It was suggested that holding this information in a national database would be better than in a plan that required public consultation and that only got updated once every 10 years.

At the 28 March 2024 managers' meeting, it was recommended that this body of work go to the RMA team for further comments. The documents went to the RMA team for review in June 2024 and feedback mainly recommended that the mana whenua engagement work be adopted as guidance only.

At the 1 August 2024 Managers meeting, the following was discussed:

- Amendments to the consultation guidance so that NZC and other regions are consulted in the first steps of the process rather than before public notification. Removal of internal consultation step preceding public notification. These amendments have been incorporated into the attached version.
- Support for the four items to be adopted as guidance only, as per recommendation in the ministerial review.

- Managers have suggested utilising cross region staff resources for writing management plans.
- Managers have noted that the consultation processes can end up being the time-consuming and costly part of the process rather than the drafting of the management plan.
- Managers note that the guidance cannot be adopted as NZC policy as some of the work relates to best practice, which is more onerous than what the Conservation Act 1987 requires.
- Managers suggested asking the Minister for advice from iwi advisory forums on what they want to see in these plans to provide cost savings to licence holders.
- Managers recommended that the mana whenua engagement work was to remain as guidance at this stage rather than being adopted as a policy. Other minor wording changes have also been considered.

DOC has been consulted regarding the draft guidelines and key elements. NZC staff were initially intending to develop SFGMP containing only the mandatory elements listed in the Conservation Act. However, external experts including the team at DOC advised additional information was necessary including policies, outcomes and monitoring of species.

I also attached a letter from the Minister outlining his expectations about future SFGMPs.

[Ap 5 Letter from Minister WC SFGMP.pdf](#)

The papers' links are provided below. **Please consult with your regional councils and provide feedback by 29 November.**

[Ap 1 SFGMP Consultation Policy.docx](#)

[Ap 2 Key Elements SFGMP Policy.docx](#)

[Ap 3 SFGMP Policy.docx](#)

[Ap 4 Mana Whenua Engagement guideline.docx](#)

Standing Orders Review

I also attach the revised standing orders for your information. The key point highlighted at the hui was that the change meant decisions made at online meetings are able to stand and don't need to be ratified at subsequent in person hui.

Staff received feedback that while some papers can be provided electronically agendas needed to be sent in paper. Councillors requested better organised papers grouped in thematic order.

Correspondence Received

NZC discussed a letter from Hawke's Bay entitled: Development of a National Game Bird Population Monitoring Programme and Standard Operating Procedures.

The Hawke's Bay Fish & Game Council is seeking that NZC urgently develop a National Game Bird Population Monitoring Programme and Standard Operating Procedures.

Population Monitoring is a key function of councils under the Conservation Act, and as it constitutes a significant portion of regional budgets, it is vital that the organisation's approach to monitoring game bird populations is scientifically robust and defensible.

Once the future direction of this programme is established, the Hawke's Bay Fish & Game Council is fully committed to implementing this programme.

NZC directed me to fast-track development of a National Game Bird Population Monitoring Programme and Standard Operating Procedures for the February NZC meeting. I will be engaging with regional teams and relevant external experts on this.

We also received correspondence from Nigel Juby, chair Auckland/Waikato with regards to the Risk Register.

Public Excluded resolutions

These are the resolutions brought out of public excluded:

Maritime

NZC received a report.

The NZC CEO is now working to put in place a contract for the maritime coordinator position.

Rakaia

An update on Rakaia WCO from North Canterbury was received.

Levies

A legal opinion on levies was received and Councillors agreed to circulate it to the regions. This is attached.

Diversions

NZC has considered our diversion process. We note that we are fast tracking an infringement process.

NZC directs regions to meet the making amends component of the Solicitor General's guidelines Solicitor-General's Guidelines For Payments Connected To Plea Arrangements Or Diversion, dated 6 August 2021 paragraph 1.2". The purpose of these Guidelines is to reinforce the need to ensure that payment of reparation is not the principal reason for entering plea arrangements or offering diversion."

The NZC advises regions to carefully also consider paragraph 3.8 "*Enforcement agencies should avoid the appearance of any private bargain with defendants and be cautious before incorporating payment of fines and costs into diversion conditions,*" and consider diversion fines be made to an external charity.

CEO report

The Council made several resolutions based on the report:

- The NZC commends Hamish Carnachan and the NZ Hunter team for their outstanding work. The fish special edition is another outstanding piece of work from the team, showcasing Fish & Game in a positive light, the benefits of freshwater angling, and the diversity of our anglers
- Publish the CE report with commercially sensitive material redacted.
- Raised concerns about biosecurity and recommended a higher level of risk due to the potential impact of new invasive species in the future.


The redacted report is attached.

Southland – Otago Chairs' letter

The Council discussed a joint letter from the Southland and Otago Regional Fish & Game Councils sent to the Minister dated 16 August 2024.

NZC endorsed the chairs to work on a letter to the Minister to rectify the Southland-Otago Chairs' letter.

Yours Sincerely



Corina Jordan
CEO New Zealand Fish & Game Council

12.6 Tiaki Maniototo

Tiaki Maniototo Meeting Patearoa 5th September 2024

Scroll Plain Management plan.

At present the Maniototo is exempted from current grazing regulations for a limited time pending development of a management plan specific to the Maniototo. All has been quiet on this front for some time but now there is action. ORC which is leading the planning has put out a letter to landowners and have held meetings with landowners, facilitated by TM.

A contentious development has been the drawing of a yellow line around the edge of the polygons representing wetlands on the ORC lidar survey. The yellow line is an arbitrary representation of the extent of the scroll plain. The line is loosely based on the level of the 2019 flood. The area incorporated within the yellow line is much larger than the previous border. It includes a lot of working paddocks. This has caused considerable concern amongst Maniototo farmers.

At present two main processes seem to be occurring. ORC has Kelley Heath a GIS analyst working on satellite images and measures of dryness for further definition of wetlands. Sami Khan indicated that ORC plans to have 4 classes of wetland that would be managed differently. Julia Briggs from the policy team is also involved. TM has facilitated meetings between ORC and Maniototo farmers and has also arranged for Lyndon Taylor to meet with individual farmers to document their paddocks and their use and function on a GIS system.

I imagine that these two data sets will eventually be compared and form the basis for further discussion. Other considerations are the official definition of wetlands which would be expected to exclude nearly all working paddocks, what is envisaged as a healthy fully functioning scroll plain, and what measurements and monitoring would form part of a management plan.

The main issue for TM is getting this process completed quickly so that the fencing programme can resume. At present this is very quiet because of the ongoing lack of definition of the border of the scroll plain and what are and are not wetlands.

Water Quality Report

The water quality report presented at the last meeting and sent for further review was expected to be presented at this meeting. This did not occur. It is apparently undergoing review by a third independent party. The expectation is that Morgan Trotter will bring the report back to the next meeting on October 24.

Spring Planting

Spring planting has started and will run until Christmas. The plant nursery is performing very well and has an excess of plants hardened to Central Otago conditions. These are now

available to other organisations and are potentially a source of plants for Fish and Game projects.

Fish Passage.

Pete Ravenscroft from the ORC galaxiid project is looking for data on fish passage at the Paerau Weir including any that may be held by Fish and Game. At issue is blocking the passage of perch. He and ORC are looking for sites for additional flow monitors to better understand river flows and calculate MALF.

Recreation Sites

Willows have been removed at Cogan's and Creamery Bridges. These areas will now be planted with natives and have signs and picnic tables put in.

Maniototo Irrigation Company

MIC reports good flows into the Logan Burn reservoir which has been drawn down to low levels this season. It is too early to tell how much water will be available to supplement river flows this coming season.

Visit to Takitakitoa

Jayde Couper reissued the invitation for TM to visit Takitakitoa and dates are to be discussed.

13.0 Correspondence

13.1 NZC to Otago

13.1.1 NZC Zero Based Budgeting

Feedback to NZC on meeting schedule and budget process

The letter which follows is a New Zealand F&G Council (NZC) response to regional Chairs to clarify a new budget process which was agreed at its last meeting. The NZC is proposing that Regions move to a 'Zero Based Budgeting System' and while it was agreed, details on how it would work, the decision making process, and how it aligns to present policy were surprisingly lacking. The previous Contestable Funding system and managers/CE involvement has now been removed.

Policy change?

There were no supporting papers or staff reports produced to the NZC meeting for what appears to be a major policy change. More information has come out since (from the chair and NZC CE) and this letter attempts to clarify the situation further. Typically, a change of this nature would have been well researched - and consulted on - before being imposed. My understanding is that some key NZC staff were caught unaware.

The surprise move has created some instability within the organisation. Regional Managers have met and asked questions of the NZC CEO about how this is proposed to be made operational in a very short space of time.

Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB)

Zero based budgeting as a concept is well explained in the attached paper and has been proposed on and off over the last 5 years. On the face of it, it sounds like a pragmatic solution for an organisation under financial pressure. It is one of those 'easy to say, hard to do' situations – especially in a devolved structure such as Fish & Game with clear statutory roles. There is a need for greater clarity on what is to be achieved in practice. And there are risks to ZBB including:

- **Time-Consuming Process:** ZBB will require a detailed review and justification of each budget line every budgeting cycle. It also needs significant effort to gather data, analyse needs, and evaluate every cost. This will be highly time-consuming and burdensome for staff. F&G, with its limited administrative resources, may find this overwhelming.
- **Lack of Expertise:** F&G may lack the in-house financial expertise needed to implement ZBB effectively. Training staff or hiring consultants to navigate the process could add unplanned costs.
- **Short-Term Focus:** A focus on justifying current-year expenses can lead to a short-term perspective and neglecting long-term strategic planning.

- **Potential for Bias:** The decision-making system can be influenced by bias or internal politics, leading to funding being allocated based on who makes the best case rather than where it is genuinely needed.

The biggest issue with ZBB is that the organisation has so few line items because 70-80% of our budgets are typically salaries, and a good portion of the remainder are fixed costs associated with just existing – rent, rates, and insurance etc. Less than 10% of Otago’s budget is associated with external projects costs such as flights for bird counts, signage, TAKF events etc. So unless the NZC is seriously thinking about cutting salaries, (which would result in immediate redundancies) then there are very little other savings to be made. If they do intend to go down the path of adjusting salaries budgets, then it is very important that they have a good framework in place to support it.

This was likely a primary reason independent financial specialist David Hunt recommend incremental shifts of resources based on *regional angler and hunter use* rather than suggesting zero based budgeting in his 2022 report to NZC. That seems a more sound and palatable approach as it would be less disruptive and help regions to think more strategically about priorities, and even amalgamations.

Previous Contestable Funding process created transparency and rigour

While there were faults in the Contestable Funding process, it did operate rather seamlessly for nearly two decades without any serious issues. The process did create some transparency and engagement in the system, which will now be absent without the managers testing each budget from an operational perspective. That will now be left to the NZC staff who may know little about the real costs associated with our local work. But who will now analyse the NZC budget? Are regions, particularly levy paying regions, just to accept that their levies are being used or distributed appropriately?

Financial Policy required

The change highlights the need for a policy overhaul to move forward and this should be encouraged. Ad hoc changes such as this are counter productive and create uncertainty in Regions, and with NZC.

The legal advice NZC recently received from Resolved Public Law was quite clear about the need for a review of financial policy in this area – and especially around levying, and suggests (more than once) the importance of communication, transparency and engagement of the regions in developing that (See F&G Levy system legal opinion 5, 6, 28.8, 28.10, 30, Note 21 and 33, 35)

The advice couldn’t be clearer than at 15 when it states:

The facts set out above raise strong grounds for reviewing the current budgeting, licencing and levy systems. There are other models that could be employed (for example: proportional percentage of the licence fee; or a contingent basis that also provides for systemic reconciliation of overs and unders between forecast and actual).

Any such work should be led by an expert in statutory levy and licencing policies and systems, supported as necessary with legal and financial expertise.

Otago is now faced with a substantial change to the budget system without any reference to professional advice suggested above. Para 41 concludes that *this process should include agreements about budgeting principles*. That has not been sought by NZC. Curiously, the NZC has recently adopted a policy for setting policy and this approach doesn't comply.

NZC review of regional budgets runs counter to the legal advice

The NZC's determination to assess every regional budget annually is also inconsistent with the legal advice. Admittedly the role of NZC in overseeing *regional* budgets is rather ambiguous. On the one hand it suggests that NZC should not be taking an active role in regional budget setting (Geddis earlier advice, 37 in Levy system advice) – that is clearly a regional role. On the other hand it says that it can review the assessed management costs and estimates. However, 38 of the Levy System advice is very clear;

That does not mean that the NZC needs to be forensically reviewing the FGCs assessment of their management costs. There is no duty on the New Zealand Council to review baseline budgets as a matter of course. The statutory obligation to develop estimates sits with the regional Fish and Game Councils, as does responsibility for their accuracy. The New Zealand Council need not intervene with that process. It would be overly burdensome to do so and is not necessary where the balance in autonomy and oversight between regional Councils and the New Zealand Council is functioning well.

Further, Para 39 states that NZC has the discretion to review budget estimates from regions, but under certain conditions – when they consider them to be questionable in accuracy or unreliable. Is this the situation we are in? Otherwise, it rightfully suggests NZC should be using their audit function to resolve any issues with how regional activities are undertaken and monies are spent. That seems a better approach.

In summary, the NZC has assumed a role of assessing regional budgets when the maximum extent of their role is to satisfy itself that they have been properly assessed by the region. There is a distinct difference, and until there is agreed policy in place to support the present approach, it could be considered an overreach of its powers.

Implications of Zero Based Budgeting for Otago

Otago staff already undertake a rigorous review of the budget and workplan on an annual basis, looking at every line item and carefully shifting resources to fund strategic priorities and reducing costs where possible. We have also been very good at finding external sources of income to support our work and reduce the burden on licence fees. It's not strictly Zero Based budgeting but it is the best practical alternative. The letter seems to acknowledge that by suggesting *Councils are encouraged to consider the previous year's budget as a guide*. That isn't zero based budgeting, that is pretty much business as usual.

It appears the new system is going to lock in the widely criticised process used last year with the Chairs making a case for funding to NZC, except next year it won't be just Contestable

Funding bids, it will be chair having to justify the entire budget. It is a bit unusual in local government to have chairs make such a detailed case, that is usually the role of senior staff with the institutional knowledge. That will be a formidable task for a chair, especially as a volunteer.

Otago staff would have more faith in the system if last years applications had had a better hearing as we had developed very good OWP and budget process. Otago ran a good strategic priorities exercise, came up with 4 key priorities (which were closely aligned to NZC) shifted resources internally to achieve them, identified a gap in implementation and applied (Contestable funding Bid) for additional funds to meet the strategic goals. It was turned down by NZC without explanation.

There is a risk here for Otago in ZBB. If a number of regions undertake a zero based review and confirm that they need additional funding, then this will need to be funded from either savings from elsewhere (unlikely), increasing licence fees, higher levy demands on levy paying regions, or by NZC taking funds from regional reserves.

An opportunity based on last years application?

There is an opportunity for Otago to make its case again for additional staff resources to meet its strategic objectives. Given that it is aligned to both the strategic goals of Otago, and the national organisation, there should be no reason for NZC to refuse. There may be other areas which require additional funding too.

Recommendation

- 1. Write to NZC and request that they urgently review and replace the current financial policy to save further ad-hoc adjustments to it.**
- 2. Report to the November meeting with an update on the zero budgeting process**

NZC Meeting Schedule feedback

NZC is consulting on its meeting schedule and is looking for alignment by Regional Councils to it. There is no urgency to respond to this (deadline by late November) so will hold that over until our new Council meets. At that time our own 2025 meeting schedule will come through as a draft. Hopefully there will be more clarity on the budget process by then.

No action required at this point

Ian Hadland

Chief Executive

17 September 2024



13/9/24

Otago Fish and Game Council

Dear Colin and Councillors,

I am writing to you outlining the New Zealand Fish and Game Council's (NZC) resolution to move to a Zero-Based Budgeting approach in meeting its statutory requirements under the Conservation Act. NZC understands that its resolution reached at its 170 meeting has caused some uncertainty. As such I am writing to you to clarify the intentions of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council.

I would hope that on reading this letter, I have managed in some way to explain the resolution NZC passed, with respect to Zero-Based Budgeting, it's intention, and the pathway forward for Fish and Game as a national organisation. Further, it may go some way towards satisfying the ministerial, and departmental scrutiny, that Fish and Game is currently under, demonstrating that we can manage Fish and Game's future with minimal 'interference'. Personally, I would like to take the opportunity, in advance, to thank you for being a participant, as we share this positive move forward for Fish and Game nationally.

Executive Summary

Zero-Based Budgeting is a strategic budgeting approach that mandates a fresh evaluation of all expense lines during each fiscal year budgeting cycle. It promotes alignment with strategic goals: Where every line item is assessed against the organisations or regions strategic goals, helping to prioritise activities relative to the budget available.

By starting from a 'zero base' at the beginning of each budget cycle, an organisation can create an effective process for analysing and deciding where to allocate funds, and determine new funding requirements. Unlike Fish and Games traditional contestable budgeting process, where the previous budget was the starting point, and NZC only considered adjustments on top of this as proposed by the region - sometimes termed incremental budgeting.

Zero-Based Budgeting is a professional, and sustainable accounting business practice, offering several advantages, including focused operations, lower costs, budget flexibility, and strategic execution:

- Ensure financial transparency.
- Identify strategic priorities.
- Align, evaluate, and optimize spending.
- Control and monitor budget.
- Embrace value-based spending.

Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, game birds and their habitats

New Zealand Council

Level 2, The Dominion Building, 78 Victoria Street, Wellington 6011. P.O. Box 25-055, Wellington 6146, New Zealand.
Telephone (04) 499 4767 Email nzcouncil@fishandgame.org.nz www.fishandgame.org.nz

The New Zealand Fish and Game Council already undertakes a Zero-Based Budgeting approach each year as part of building its draft annual operating work program (OWP), and draft budgets. It is the understanding of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council, that the majority of Regional Councils, also undertake this exercise, in preparing their OWP's. Therefore, the only change being sought for the 2025/26 financial year, is the provision of this information to the NZC. This is to support NZC in effectively discharging its statutory duty, to give particularly careful consideration to, the regional Fish and Game Councils' assessed management costs, and the potential impact on their management activities, along with keeping cost recovery front and centre, when reaching it's decision as to the level of licence fee that would be "appropriate".

For 2025/26 Regional Fish & Game Councils are encouraged to consider the previous year's budget as a guide figure whilst, starting from \$0.00, looking at each line item, it's priority, and subsequently justifying the value to be applied. The effective outcome may be, an increase, or decrease, relative to the previous years budget total. For material changes in projects the preparation of a business case is recommended.

The New Zealand Council CEO will provide budget templates to streamline the process, along with a business case template for more fundamental shifts in proposed budgets (i.e. >\$30,000).

The New Zealand Fish & Game CEO has provided an timetable to Regional Managers/CE's and this is set out below.

The role out of a NZC Zero-Based Budgeting approach in recommending licence fees, is intended to be a 2-year process. The first-year focusses on providing increased clarity to NZC on each regions overall budget so that NZC can discharge it's statutory requirements. If budget policies need to be reviewed, to enable material changes in budgeting expectations, such as resource reallocation, or changes due to development of national population monitoring approaches, then this will need to be undertaken through review of budget policies, and in collaboration with Regional Fish & Game Councils. Any implementation of changes in budget policies would occur in year 2, along with refinement of the budgeting process taking the learnings from year 1.

The Resolutions.

At the New Zealand Fish and Game Council (NZC) meeting 170, the following were resolved:

- 1. NZC resolves that there will no longer be a Contestable Fund budget round. Instead NZC, on an annual basis, will be taking a zero-based budget approach, whereby the entire budget of a region, will be reviewed annually, and in setting both Licence Fees recommendations, and organisational budgets moving forward.**

Moved - Dave Coll, Seconded - Darryl Reardon, Passed, no abstentions, no votes against.

2. **Utilisation of regional reserves is lawful and NZC will consider levying regional reserves as part of this process. (Note: There's no statutory recognition of the term 'reserves').**

Moved - Dave Coll, Seconded - Darryl Reardon, Passed, one abstention - Dave Harris, no votes against.

In relation to resolution 2, it is noted that only licence income can be levied, which means, in relation to reserves, this would be unlevied licence income.

The NZC CEO circulated further information to what Zero-Based Budgeting is, and the first-year phase, for what is anticipated to be a two-year project. This was circulated as directed by NZC and is attached: **NZC CEO Letter to Regional Managers - Zero-Based Budgeting**

NZC is aware that, the organisation has been calling for changes to the way we do our budgeting, and there is general acceptance that, we are not currently fiscally sustainable in the longer term. Of further consideration, in the past, NZC has only been able to consider contestable fund applications, and their impact on the overall budget. This may be construed as that, NZC may not have necessarily discharged its full statutory function, when reaching its recommendation, as to an "appropriate" licence fee.

As mentioned above, NZC is most conscious of its statutory responsibilities when recommending an 'appropriate' licence fee, particularly, the New Zealand Council must:

- a) Give particularly careful consideration to the regional Fish and Game Councils' assessed management costs, and the potential impact, on their management activities, when reaching its decision as to the level of licence fee that would be "appropriate"; and
- b) Give genuine attention, and thought, to the regional Fish and Game Councils' views and recommendations before making its recommendation to the Minister.

NZC fee setting power - s 26C(1)(e) CA - advice 29.05.2023[82][23]

Note that (b) above, is addressed through consultation with the regions on the proposed licence fee, and levy, and grants by NZC, which is then sent to the regions for consultation. This feedback is then considered by the NZC, before it makes its recommendations to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing.

Section 26Q(1)(d) of the Act requires that regional Fish and Game Councils shall:

- a) *"Assess the costs attributable to the management of sports fish and game"; and*
- b) *Develop and recommend to the New Zealand Council "appropriate licence fees to recover costs".*

The assessment of 'management costs', and 'cost recovery', are therefore central components in the assessment of an 'appropriate' licence fee, which the New Zealand Council must take close account of, when reaching its recommendation, as to an 'appropriate' licence fee. It is also noted that, the Act does not leave much scope for the New Zealand Council to recommend a licence fee higher than that, required to recover the costs associated with Fish and Game's statutory activities. As such, the New Zealand Fish & Game Council is seeking greater clarity around regional budgets for the 2025/26 financial years, with a two-year staged implementation of Zero-Based Budgeting.

Year 1 is for Region's to provide NZC their proposed budget and rationale i.e. the work that regions already do in preparing their OWP's. NZC will provide a template for this to assist and reduce workloads. Timetable for preparation of information is set out below.

If budget policies need to be reviewed to enable material changes in budgeting expectations, such as resource reallocation, then this will need to be undertaken through review of budget policies, and in collaboration with Regional Fish & Game Councils. Any implementation of changes in budget policies would occur in year 2, along with refinement of the budgeting process taking the learnings from year 1.

NZC CEO Action.

On the back of the NZC meeting 170 resolution, stated above, the NZC CEO, Corina, was charged with preparing a communication to all regional managers, with information regarding this resolution. That information detailed the support that, was to be available, and an indicated time schedule. For further assistance, a paper that maybe described as, '*Zero-Based Budgeting 101*', will become available shortly. Further, to support managers, and relevant staff, a template will be provided, as soon as possible, to assist the move to this budgeting process.

NZC CEO Letter to Regional Managers - Zero-Based Budgeting

Timetable Consideration.

NZC's expectation is that the process, whilst starting this coming financial year, as mentioned, will be a two-year project for full implementation. Please see the initial implementation timetable:

- 06-07 Nov 24 Shift this to an in-person meeting for Managers/ CE's to work through strategic priorities, and how to implement a Zero-Based Budgeting approach;
- 13-14 Dec 24 NZC induction and strategic planning session – outcomes to regions to consider i.e. feeds into regional strategy workshops in February;

- 20 Dec NZC to provide templates for regional budgets, supporting papers, and collation;
- Jan/Feb Regions to go through their strategy sessions, which then feed into the development of budgets and OWP's;
- Feb Regions develop draft OWP's and budgets;
- 25 Feb and week of 03 March 25 Regional discussion on proposed budgets (and OWP) with NZC CEO and CFO.
- 01 March 25 Combined Chairs / NZC meeting – Strategic priorities to be reviewed/ socialised, any business cases could also be discussed.
- 13 March 25 Draft regional budgets to be shared with CFO (NZC CEO and CFO can seek further clarification from regions on budgets if needed to support development of advice to NZC).
- 11-12 April 24 NZC Budget meeting – Chairs (*supported by Manager*) talk to NZC about their budget (includes presentation of a business case for any major projects).
- Consultation with regions on resolutions from 11 & 12 April meeting.

Zero-Based Budgeting for Fish and Game.

Traditionally, Fish and Game, has started with the previous year's budget, and built upon it, quite usually, only justifying new expenses. This has resulted in a system of incremental increases in budgets overtime. This may have meant that, overall efficiencies across the organisation have not necessarily been considered, and achieved, to the extent now required.

Zero-Based Budgeting is an accounting practice that, requires an organisation to consider its revenue, and expenses, for each accounting period. It ensures that each expense is considered and is justifiable against the strategic priorities for the organisation, and revenue. The major advantages of Zero-Based Budgeting are, flexible budgets, focussed operations, lower costs and/or, increased efficiencies, with more disciplined execution. Benefits can include lower costs by keeping old, and new expenses in check. It's acknowledged that, with initial implementation, there may be potential drawbacks. These may include, more detailed 'thinking' in the short term, be resource intensive, and can contribute to workforce uncertainty, especially if there is the potential for staffing cuts.

The Zero-Based Budgeting approach is intended to provide visibility, and clarity to NZC, as it considers licence fees, and levies. From this, NZC is required to consult with regions. NZC also notes that, consultation requires meaningful consideration to the feedback provided by regions, and their budgetary needs.

At its simplest level, Zero-Based Budgeting is about reviewing, and considering each budget line item against strategic priorities, and revenue:

- What are the key operational activities that deliver on the strategic priorities.
- What can be removed, what can be delayed, what is essential.
- Also, what may be freed up for new initiatives.
- Where may efficiency gains be made.
- Revenue generating opportunities.

You may very well consider the previous year's budget as a guide figure whilst, starting from \$0.00, looking at each line item, its priority, and subsequently justifying the value to be applied. The effective outcome may be, an increase, or decrease, relative to the previous year's budget total.

Further, quarterly reviews of budget performance, are important to ensure good fiscal management. Of this, I'm sure, managers would be giving attention too, and reporting to their councils. Another important objective would be that costs budgeted for, and council approved for a 'line item', remain for that 'line'. An example may be, where a staff member leaves your employ, those funds are not used for any other purpose outside of that budget line, effectively those funds become a surplus, and accounted for at end of year conciliations.

NZC Council

NZC effectively follows a similar process to Zero-Based Budgeting as part of its current budget considerations. The council, after presentation of the budget, then goes through the entire budget, seeking clarification of delivery against their key priorities before the budget is approved as the final budget. The differences between the current process, and the to be implemented Zero-Based Budgeting method, may be in the reports that will be produced outlining these processes, and the rationale for the proposed budget.

Legal Advice – Licence Fees

The attached legal advice may also assist *NZC fee setting power - s 26C(1)(e) CA - advice 29.05.2023[82][23]*. The New Zealand Council must take close account of management costs when recommending licence fees and can also take into account other factors such as, organisational financial resilience, and affordability of licences. Section 26Q(1)(d) requires Regional Fish and Game Councils to first assess costs for the management of sports fish and game, and then to recommend "appropriate" licence fees to recover those costs. Cost recovery is therefore a central component in the assessment of an "appropriate" fee. We can't continue to assume that the minister of the day, will automatically approve any increase of licence fee that we request. Consistent with this, the New Zealand Council must take close account of the

regional Fish and Game Councils' assessed management costs when reaching its recommendation as to an "appropriate" licence fee.

I would hope that, I have managed in some way, to explain the resolution NZC passed, it's intention, and the pathway forward for Fish and Game as a national organisation, to meet its statutory obligations. Further, it may go some way towards satisfying the ministerial, and departmental scrutiny, that Fish and Game is currently under, demonstrating that we can manage Fish and Game's future with minimal 'interference'. Personally, I would like to take the opportunity, in advance, to thank you for being a participant, as we share this positive move forward for Fish and Game nationally.

Yours sincerely



Barrie Barnes | Chair
New Zealand Fish and Game Council

Mobile 021 925 006

E BBarnes@fishandgame.org.nz W www.fishandgame.org.nz

13.1.2 Response to Letter on Proposed Licence Fee and Levy



Otago Fish and Game Council
247 Hanover Street
P O Box 76
Dunedin 9054

18 September 2024

Dear Mr Colin Weatherall and Councillors,

I am writing to you on behalf of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council in response to your letter dated 26 May 2024, providing feedback on the New Zealand Fish and Game Council's proposed licence fee and levy.

In discharging the New Zealand Fish and Game Councils statutory requirements to consult with regions when proposing licence fees and levies, the New Zealand Fish and Game Council:

1. Wrote to Fish and Game Council Regions (20 Feb 2024) proposing no increase in licence fee and recommending councils consider a 3% reduction in their budgets;
2. The Fish & Game regions were consulted around their contestable funding bids for the 2024/25 budget.
3. NZC considered Licence fees and levies at meeting 168 dated 19 April 2024;
4. From NZC meeting 168, NZC wrote to each Regional Fish and Game Council seeking feedback on its proposed licence fee and levy (29 April 2024);
5. NZC considered the Regional feedback at its meeting 169 dated 18 and 19 June 2024;
6. NZC wrote to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing dated 3 July 2024, seeking a \$3 increase in licence fee
7. The Minister for Hunting and Fishing approved the licence fee increase on 11 July 2024, and the Minister's letter was circulated to regions on 11 July 2024.

Your feedback on the New Zealand Fish and Game Council's recommended licence fee and levy was considered at their meeting on the 18 and 19 June 2024 at its meeting 169. In Considering your feedback, NZC resolved to seek a small increase in licence fee of \$3 (noting OFGC sought a \$2 increase for sports fish only), with all other ratios to remain the same, with no increase in resident licence fees.

NZC wrote to the Minister on 3 July 2024 seeking a \$3 increase in licence fee across both Game and Sports fish due to inflation and a background of rapidly rising costs. This was approved by the Minister for Hunting and Fishing on 11 July 2024, where the Minister also rejected a 50% increase in the Designated Waters Non-resident Day licence due to insufficient evidence being provided to support the proposed increase in the licence fee. The Regions were notified of this decision on 11 July 2024.

It is noted that Otago Fish and Game Sought:

Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, game birds and their habitats

New Zealand Council

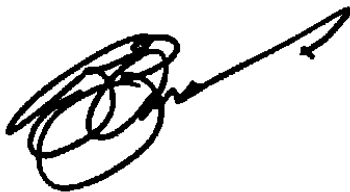
- That the 2024/25 adult whole season sports fish licence fee be set at \$155 (\$153 2023 current) and that the adult whole season game licence remains at \$113 (inclusive of a \$5 fee for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp),
- That the Non-Resident whole season licence be raised to \$350 (from \$264),
- All other ratios to remain the same, with prices moving accordingly,
- That the additional levy of \$41,657 (3.36%) be removed from Otago's levy demand until it can be proven that it is being lawfully taken.

The \$3 increase in both Sports fish and Game bird licence fees means Fish and Game still need to utilise 1.3% of reserves (\$173,042). The impact to Otago is \$16,651 from reserves, in contrast to the 3.36% of reserves originally proposed. The understanding of NZC is that Otago Fish and Game Council reserves are currently at 88% of base funds.

NZC considers that they can lawfully levy unlevied licenced income (this may sit in reserves), as they have done for 2024/25. Please find attached the two legal opinions (29/5/23 and 25/8/24).

The reserves policy was amended during COVID-19 to enable regions to reduce reserves to 20% of budgets (NZC meeting 144, 20 May 2020). Please also find attached the draft reserves policy (NZC meeting 162 resolved to consult on the draft proposed Policy - feedback has been received by all regions).

Yours sincerely



Barrie Barnes | Chair
New Zealand Fish and Game Council

Mobile 021 925 006

E BBarnes@fishandgame.org.nz W www.fishandgame.org.nz

13.2 Otago to NZC

Nil

13.3 General Correspondence In

13.3.1 ORC - Thanks



From the Office of the Chairperson

1 August 2024

Ben Sowry and Mason Court
Fish and Game New Zealand

via Email: bsowry@fishandgame.org.nz ; mcourt@fishandgame.org.nz

Tēnā kōrua Ben and Mason

Otago Regional Council Visit to Bendigo Wildlife Management Reserve restoration project

I am writing to express our appreciation and gratitude for you hosting the Otago Regional Council at the Bendigo Wildlife Management Reserve planting site on Thursday, 25 July.

You took time out of your busy days to demonstrate the work of Fish and Game, and the community, in restoring and enhancing the Bendigo Reserve to ensure its use and recreation value for future generations.

Fish and Game's future vision, commitment, and community engagement are inspiring, and we learned a lot from seeing the planting site first hand and hearing about the community connections from sourcing plants from Department of Corrections in addition to local nurseries, through to community planting days.

ORC is pleased to have been able to support your effort through successful ECO Fund grants in previous years.

We wish you ongoing success as we all work together in our different roles for the future of Otago's environment.

Kā mihi,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gretchen Robertson".

Cr Gretchen Robertson
Chairperson

cc: Ian Hadland, CEO, Otago Fish and Game, ihadland@fishandgame.org.nz
Simon Park, Delivery Lead Catchments, Otago Regional Council, simon.park@orc.govt.nz

3.3.2 Hon Todd McClay – Matters Concerning NZC

Hon Todd McClay

Minister of Agriculture
 Minister of Forestry
 Minister for Hunting and Fishing
 Minister for Trade
 Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs



18 SEP 2024

Lindsay Withington
 Southland Fish and Game Council

Colin Weatherall
 Otago Fish and Game Council

By email: ihadland@fishandgame.org.nz

Ref: TM01918 / CORM-1414

Dear Lindsay Withington and Colin Weatherall

Thank you for your email dated 16 August 2024 regarding your Councils' joint position on matters concerning Fish and Game New Zealand's (Fish and Game's) governance and potential change to your organisation.

Firstly, I would like to thank you for your commitment to advancing the interests of anglers and hunters over the last few years. I recognise that this is entirely voluntary and appreciate the time and work members dedicate to the hunting and fishing sector.

I am aware of the long-standing issues within Councils, largely a result of the previous government and existing legislation. I have been regularly meeting with the New Zealand Fish and Game Council (NZ Council) to receive updates on Councils' conduct and performance, and how I can best support and strengthen Fish and Game.

Supporting Fish and Game is one of my top priorities as Minister for Hunting and Fishing. As I said to the NZ Council, the 2021 Governance review, and other reviews, were helpful, however they have not provided a complete picture of operations of Fish and Game, nor have they addressed all of the issues your and other Councils have raised. I am currently considering ways to address these issues to enable Fish and Game to be a more effective and efficient organisation at delivering value for money for licence holders. I will look to engage with all Fish and Game Councils once this work has been completed.

I wish you all the best in your upcoming elections and I appreciate you taking the time to write.

Warm regards

Hon Todd McClay
 Minister for Hunting and Fishing

13.4 General Correspondence Out

16th August 2024

Hon Todd McClay
Minister of Hunting & Fishing
By email: T.McClay@ministers.govt.nz

CC: NZ Fish and Game Council

Dear Minister McClay

Possible modest changes to Fish & Game

The Otago and Southland Fish and Game Councils recently held a joint meeting and, anticipating that you may wish to make some organisational changes given your interest in the Hunting & Fishing portfolio, our Councils resolved to write to you. You are bound to be receiving plenty of unsolicited advice, so our Councils wish to add constructively to the commentary you will be receiving.

If you are considering changes, you will be made aware of various reports on aspects of our organisation. However, you are unlikely to receive any direct advice highlighting the organisational challenges associated with making some of the changes that have previously been recommended.

Governance review

The highest profile recent review was the Governance Review, which I'm sure you will have received a copy of. Some aspects of this review were hard to reconcile for our existing democratically elected governors. However, the review appropriately highlighted that the strength of the organisation was the regionally devolved structure and our ability to deliver on the ground results, in our regional communities. Our Councils respectfully suggest that this must remain a cornerstone of our organisation.

Resource Allocation Review

A resource allocation review was commissioned (appended), that occurred concurrently with the Governance Review, but was independent (led by David Hunt a respected professional director and ex treasury staffer). This review addressed the fact that resource allocation has remained largely unchanged since the amalgamation of various acclimatisation societies, into the current structure of the 12 regional Fish and Game Councils. Unfortunately, trout fishing and game bird hunting has decreased in popularity in the North Island, with levels of use remaining more stable or growing in the South. Resource allocation has not reflected the changes in activity of both anglers and hunters, so the North Island now receives a disproportionate level of funding to support significantly reduced use.

The resource allocation report concludes that angler and hunter activity should be the primary basis for allocating resources across the organisation. However, because the New Zealand Council is comprised of governors whose views may reflect regional parochialism, there is an inherent inertia when it comes to considering or implementing change, where the existing budget in some regions would sensibly reduce.

Regional structure alignment

An additional review was commissioned to build on the Governance Review and recommend a future regional structure and a subsequent requested refinement (both appended). However, as with the resource allocation review, there was internal resistance from some regions that did not wish to amalgamate, and the recommendations have largely been moth-balled (except for the Wellington and Taranaki Regions who should be commended for choosing to proceed with an amalgamation). Given the independence of this work, it is suggested if changes to the structure are considered, this work should inform that.

Centralisation

If any review is considered, our Councils and I'm sure the broader organisation, would challenge you to resist the dogmatic calls to 'modernise' and 'centralise' to a hierarchical structure, common with government departments. Much of Fish & Game's efficacy is achieved because of our regional autonomy, and because we are nimble and pragmatic. For comparison, the per FTE spend of the Department of Conservation is \$265k, compared to Fish & Game's \$172K. While it's arguably an unfair comparison given our different responsibilities, none-the-less we feel it is illustrative.


Centralising the structure of Fish & Game carries an inherent risk to the present user pays, user says model, which has been successful for over 150 years, in that it will separate licence holders from decision making and weaken interest in management. At present, governance is free, making for a very cost-effective management structure. It is accepted that not all councils have the correct expertise but the present power of cooption under the Act could be better utilized to fill any gaps around council tables.

You may well recognise that it is inherent in New Zealand's culture to be somewhat skeptical about large, centralized bureaucracies, operating out of Wellington. "I'm from Wellington, I'm here to help" does not necessarily resonate with anglers and hunters. The New Zealand Council Office has grown significantly over recent years, diverting further resources from front line efforts in the regions. They are working well beyond their scope (coordination) and simply acting as advisors. That doesn't relieve regions of work, it has the effect of creating it.

In closing, we hope that you will find this material constructive and informative, rather than simply being entirely self-serving. As elected governors, we're proud of what our organisation achieves, both nationally and locally, and wish to do all we can to maintain our regional focus and delivery for anglers and hunters.

Both regions have previously extended invitations for you to attend any of our meetings, and appreciating your schedule, wondered if you would instead be interested in attending a joint meeting?

Yours sincerely



Colin Weatherall
Chair
Otago Fish & Game Council



Lindsay Withington
Chair
Southland Fish & Game Council

14.0 Items to be Received or Noted

See reports presented separately

- 14.1 Climate Change Literature Review 2024**
- 14.2 Game Season Harvest Report 2024**
- 14.3 Rainbow Trout Growth Rate in Put & Take Fisheries**
- 14.4 Otago Pukeko Monitoring 2024**
- 14.5 Upper Clutha Salmon Spawning 2024**
- 14.6 Clutha/Mata-Au Sports Fish Management Plan Programme Report**
- 14.7 ORC - The Restoration on Non-Migratory Galaxids Otago Region**
Previously circulated.

15.0 General Business