



FISH & GAME NZ, SOUTHLAND REGION

AGENDA

FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE

HELD THE COUNCIL OFFICE

17 EYE STREET

INVERCARGILL

Thursday 30th May 2024

COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM



NOTICE OF MEETING:

The next meeting of the Southland Fish & Game Council will be held on **Thursday 30th May 2024** at the Fish & Game Office Boardroom, 17 Eye Street, Invercargill commencing at **6.00pm**.

A finger tea will be provided for Staff & Councilors from 5:30pm

AGENDA:

1	Welcome
2	Apologies
3	Declarations of Interest Register circulated at meeting for Councilors to declare & sign if any conflicts of interest with agenda items
4	Confirmation of Minutes: SFGC Public meeting held 27th March 2024.
5	Notices of Motion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive & accept Health & Safety report to 30th April 2024.• LICENCE FEE RECOMMENDATION 2024-25• Angler notice considerations for 2024/2025 season (Designated Waters)• Election Considerations• Joint meeting with Otago, Tapanui 25th July
6	Staff Report
7	Councilor's Information reports. <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Letter to professional Guides Assn.b. Letter to Mr Cravensc. Licence fee recommendation 2024-25d. Email re Council meeting in Tapanui 25th July.e. Emails re Designated Waters in Southlandf. Chairmans response to Hon Todd McClay, Minister of Hunting and Fishing.
8	Administration Reports. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accounts paid & Direct Credit/Debit payment list since last meeting.• Licence sales progress to 5th May 2024.• Budget to Actual progress to 23rd May 2024.
9	NZ Council update-Dave Harris <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future Structure Working Group report• Future Finance Working Group report
10	Items for the next agenda
11	Close of meeting

Unconfirmed Minutes of the Fish & Game NZ, Southland Region Council meeting held at the Southland Fish and Game Offices, 17 Eye Street, Invercargill on 27th March 2024, commencing at 6.00pm.

Present:

Lindsay Withington (Chair)	
Dave Harris	Lyndon Norman via Zoom
Craig Horrell	Stevie-Rae Blair
David Linklater	

In attendance: Zane Moss (Manager)

Steve McCartney (Minutes).

Members of the Public: Rebecca Munro

1 Welcome:

The Chairman opened the meeting at 6.10pm and welcomed those in attendance.

2 Apologies:

Mike Hartstonge and Mike Turner.

Moved: D Harris. Seconded: C Horrell. Carried.

3 Declarations of Interest:

The individual member declaration of conflicts of interest with any item on the agenda had been circulated to members before the start of the meeting.
Any conflicts were noted by the Chairman.

Moved: L Withington. Seconded: D Harris. Carried.

4 Confirmation of Minutes.

The minutes of the public meeting held 1st February 2024 were considered.

Resolved L Withington/D Linklater That the minutes of the public meeting held 1st February 2024 were taken as read and were a true and correct record, subject to amendment to Game Bird discussion notations. Carried.

5 Notices of Motion

Health & Safety Report to 29th February 2024.

The Council Health & Safety report for the period was attached to the agenda for consideration. All known hazards were listed in the Southland Health & Safety Plan.

The meeting was advised that the health and safety plan had been reviewed and that the H & S Plan is provided to external contract providers, feedback from whom indicates our plan is robust.

The Manager advised that a staff first aid course is to be conducted on 9 April 2024.

An audit of the F & G Health and safety plan is to be undertaken by DOC in support of contract work.

Resolved C Horrell/D Harris: *That the Health and Safety Report to 29th February 2024, be received and accepted. Carried.*

Operational Strategy

Discussion regarding council member numbers with D Harris advising that the Future Structures Working Party have indicated they will recommend a lower number than what currently exists. Further discussed a possible council structure may consist of 6 elected members and 2 co-opted (F & G cannot currently appoint councillors). The manager discussed the strategy document and highlighted this region's input points that have been added to it. Some discussion regarding staff attending an annual meeting of the South Island regions, which doesn't currently happen. The manager commented that national conferences were of limited value in respect of cost/benefit and that a South Island conference would be a better prospect in that respect.

Resolved D Harris/C Horrell to accept the implementation of the Organisational Strategy as presented for implementation through the operational work plan. Carried.

Proposed Budgetary changes

NZC have requested regions make a 3% saving in the 2024/25 budget round in support of the Contestable bidding fund. Also, Managers will no longer feature in the funding allocation process as has previously occurred with NZC taking over this function. The SFGC have found net savings of \$22,263 and will submit CF bids for REM \$10,427 and Paradise Shelduck monitoring \$9,000 (helicopter transects costs). SFGC will also use \$61,000 from reserves to re-roof, replace windows and install a new fire in the Te Anau property. The existing tenants have terminated the tenancy stating that the house is too cold during the winter months. If a permanent tenancy is secured at the current rental of \$400/week, then payback would be just over 3 years.

Resolved C Horrell/D Harris to accept the proposed budget changes. Carried.

Staff Report

Pressure Sensitive Fisheries data presented indicates that the designated waters licence requirement appears to be having the desired effect of spreading fishing effort to other rivers. The Upper Oreti data recorded a peak period Jan – Feb 2024 = 64% NR anglers, 36% resident. Same data for period Jan 2019 – April 2019 = 79% NR, 21% Resident. Discussion raised around the idea of making the requirement to acquire a designated waters licence to be only applicable to Non Resident anglers.

Monowai Jetty project. Timber and fixings have been purchased and stored at a ITM hardware fenced/locked storage yard. The price point reached for this purchase has given us some headroom to look to replace the boat ramp as well as it is broken with gravel washed out.

Brightwater project. QE2 covenant has been signed to support fencing and mowing strip.

Waituna Ramp. Project on hold on account of the landowner who's property it was proposed to deposit spill on, is requiring extensive testing for the possible presence toxins in the excavated matter.

Mahinga Kai Wetland. Wetland development now completed.

Council's Information reports.

Donations, Legacies & Collaborative Projects – website wording. The proposal is to add this to our website. The purpose being to make it easier for people who may have an interest in making a bequest to F & G to support our work eg Brightwater project.

Administration Reports

No matters raised.

Correspondence

Following contact from a trout angler concerned at the works undertaken on the Waimea Steam, the manager has written to Environment Southland (Compliance Division) seeking clarification of the scope of the works, confirmation of authorisation and resources consents/permitted rule activity (SWALP) and requesting ES engage with the relevant parties (Mana Whenua, DOC and Fish & Game to develop a programme to restore the lost habitat.

NZC items.

Draft NZC policies.

- Health and Safety policy for Rangers
- Protected disclosures policy
- Research Fund Application Project.

Resolved C Horrell/D Linklater to accept the proposed policies as presented except for the ranging policy where L Withington and The Manager to provide feedback on. Carried.

D Harris outlined matters discussed – Contestable Funding Bids (Corina), licence Working party group who forecast licence sales, legal fund application from Wellington region, the economic contribution from Angling – looking at a project to show how important it is to the NZ economy. Application from Ian Hadland to attend a symposium in Alabama in May. Audit reports were good, but the process was poor.

Elections

Resolved to maintain the positions of Council Chair, Deputy Chair and NZ Council representative unchanged. Moved L Norman/ C Horrell. Carried.

Council Executive

Nominations – D Linklater, D Harris, L Withington

Resolved to accept the nominations to the executive L Withington/ C Horrell in respect of D Linklater, C Horrell/ L Withington in respect of D Harris. L Withington remain as Chair.

Mandeville Pond

Hokanui Runanga declined to purchase or accept as a gift. Still trying to sell it the adjoining landowner who has complained re numbers of hunters using it. His residence is close and subject to pellet strike (including his children and children walking on the adjacent road) along with hunters parking vehicles on his driveway. The regular hunters have been previously advised of these issues and asked to advise F & G if they want to hunt there next year. Not heard from them but upon approach from Jacob Smyth, they thought it was available because they had not heard from F & G, contrary to the previously agreed arrangement.

Sufficient public safety risks have been identified to warrant cessation of hunting activities on this pond.

Resolved D Harris/ L Withington to write to the hunters to advise that Fish and Game signs will be erected at the Mandeville Pond stating that it is closed to all hunting. Carried.

Resolved L Withington/D Harris to move meeting into public excluded.

F & G wrote to the adjacent landowners (including a valuation \$70k) asking if they are interested in purchasing the property. They have replied with an offer of \$7,000.

Resolved L Withington/L Norman that the manager write to the Millars advising that F & G are prepared to accept an offer of \$20,000. Should such an offer not be received, the property will go to market by way of auction.

Resolved L Withington/L Norman to move meeting out of public excluded.

Items for next meeting

Elections – number of elected and co-opted members.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Chairman _____ Date _____

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Background

As part of its commitment to Health and Safety and providing a safe workplace the Southland Fish and Game Council requires a report at each meeting describing:

1. Implementation and adherence to the Health and Safety policy/manual – including H&S as an agenda item for staff & ranger meetings.
2. Monitoring and Reporting – in accordance with the Health and Safety plan;
3. Risk Management (identification and treatment) – any new issues or hazards that have arisen and how these have been addressed.
4. Training programme – information sharing and training of staff and volunteers;
5. H&S incidents – near misses or injuries sustained, plus updates on past events;
6. Recommendations.

20th May 2024 update:

1. Implementation and adherence to the Health and Safety Plan

The Council Health and Safety Plan & Policy was approved at the Council meeting held 9th June 2016 and the Plan reviewed annually by staff. The 2023 annual review has been completed. An updated Health & Safety policy was signed by the manager (as per our H&S schedule) and placed in prominent positions in the Invercargill and Te Anau offices.

Our Health & Safety plan has been reviewed in 2023. Staff are currently using the Health & Safety audit checklist (provided by NZ Council) to thoroughly go through all aspects of our H&S plan to insure it remains fit for purpose. Changes will be made to the Health & Safety Plan, hazard register and appendices as appropriate.

We have now produced a Health and Safety Performance Checklist to make sure we are covering everything we need to during H&S meetings. We have also produced a H&S review schedule which documents any changes/additions we make to any elements of our H&S processes. A newly developed H&S action register documents H&S actions which need to take place, who is responsible for the H&S action and when it is to be completed by.

The Health & Safety Policy sets out the commitment that the Council has towards the Health and Safety of all Fish and Game workers and visitors. A copy of the Policy is displayed in the entrance way to the offices in Invercargill and Te Anau for all workers and visitors to see. The Policy is to be reviewed every three years and the last review was 11th November 2021, the next review being due in November 2024.

- **Staff meetings include Health and Safety on the Agenda.**
- Staff are given an opportunity to raise any issues and as a team we develop a procedure to minimise the risk. All staff are made aware immediately of any new hazards identified.
- Staff training requirements pertaining to Health & Safety, is ongoing and reviewed annually.
- Tailgate forms are used when staff go out in the Field or Ranging, these are updated as new hazards are identified.
- The boardroom when used for a meeting (visitors to the site)- all persons attending the meeting will be given a verbal Health and Safety briefing by the Chairman – i.e. shown where all exits are in case of emergency and notified of any hazards in the area.

Monitoring and Reporting

Work Place Accident Register

as at 30th May 2024

Number of workplace injuries in 2023-2024 year	1
Number of workplace injuries in 2022-2023 year	0
Number of workplace injuries in 2021-2022 year	1

2. Risk Management (identification and treatment)

Health & Safety meetings with staff are held on a regular basis with minutes of the meetings taken.

Staff continue to supply the Office with work intention forms before any activities were undertaken with start and finish times and search times recorded.

Tailgate forms are signed off by workers prior to commencing activities to identify risks and hazards so that all members were aware of the hazards and the controls in place to minimise any risk. Tailgate forms were always being reviewed and necessary updates made.

Staff & Contractors are reminded to report any near misses and minor/major incidents and to update tailgate forms when any additional significant hazards were identified.

Contractors to Fish & Game are required to sign our H&S Plan & H&S induction checklist.

A vehicle safety check list has been developed to be filled out by staff during bi-monthly H&S meetings so any safety issues with vehicles are identified.

Additionally, a new safety interaction form has been developed to keep H&S in the forefront of the staff 's mind when conducting their work.

3. Training programme

A staff training schedule was ongoing to ensure all hazards that required specific training were identified.

4. H&S Incidents

Member of the public used a partially assembled access stile (in the garage) which collapsed. No injury, but potential for an injury event. 'Staff Only' access sign to be placed on entry doors.

5. Recommendations

Council receive and accept this Health & Safety report.

CONSULTATION:	LICENCE FEE RECOMMENDATION 2024-25
TO:	Regional Chairs
CC:	Regional Managers, NZC and Administrators
AUTHOR:	Corina Jordan, CEO NZ Fish and Game Council
DATE:	29/04/2024
FEEDBACK DUE:	31/05/2024
FEEDBACK TO:	nzcouncil@fishandgame.org.nz
LINK TO REGISTER:	Consultation Register

Recommendations - Ngā taunaki

The New Zealand Fish and Game Council seeks consultation from Regional Fish and Game Councils on the following points:

1. That the 2024/25 adult whole season sports fish licence fee is set at \$153 and that the adult whole season game licence is set at \$113 (inclusive of a \$5 fee for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp), with all proportional changes to remaining licence fees and categories. (no change from 2023/24).
2. The sea run salmon licence endorsement of \$5 (as a cost-recovery mechanism). (no change from 2023/24).
3. That Designated Waters Licence, as a \$5 annual licence per Fish and Game region for resident anglers and as a day licence to non-resident anglers at a fee of \$40. (no change from 2023/24).

Discussion - Koīrero

Proposal

The New Zealand Fish and Game Council (NZC) is seeking to consult with Fish and Game regional councils on the '2024/25 licence fee recommendations and forecast LEQ' for 2024/25.

The NZC met on the 19th and 20th of April 2024 to consider the 2024/25 budgets and licence fees. Following that meeting, NZC agreed to recommend maintaining the licence fee for a sports fish adult whole season licence at \$153 and to maintain the game adult whole season licence at \$113 for 2024/2025. In recommending these fees, NZC also recommended that all other licence categories increase to the agreed proportions. A full list of recommended licence fees and categories is detailed in the Schedule attached (**Appendix 2**).

Background

Legislation provides for the following:

- Section 26Q of the Conservation Act 1987 sets out the functions of Fish and Game Councils.
- **Subsection (1)(d)(a) requires councils:** *To assess the costs attributable to the management of sports fish and game;*
- **Section 26Q(1)(d)(ii) requires Fish and Game councils:** *To develop and recommend to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council appropriate licence fees to recover costs and game bird habitat stamp fees;*
- **Section 26C(1)(e) requires NZC:** *To recommend to the Minister of Conservation an appropriate fee for fishing and hunting licenses, after considering the views and recommendations of Fish and Game Councils;*
- **Section 26C(1)(ia) also requires NZC:** *To recommend to the Minister, after considering the views and recommendations (if any) of Fish and Game Councils and the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust Board, an appropriate fee in respect of any game bird habitat stamp and the form of such stamps (the form of the stamp to be approved as part of the 2011 Game Notice).*

Operationally, the national policy of NZC specifies that all expenditure needs to be approved as part of the budget round, including capital expenditure and expenditure from reserves for all councils.

Policy

At the May 2020 NZC meeting, in response to COVID-19, the NZC set the minimum level of reserves at 20% of total budget for all councils. This level of general reserve is considered adequate to provide security against fluctuations in income and to ensure adequate operational cash flow.

The budget policy specifies that all expenditure from general and dedicated reserves needs to be notified/approved by NZC as part of the budget round, or by making an application for Exceptional Funding. There are consequences across all sectors of the organisation when any council's reserves are reduced in a manner inconsistent with this policy.

Budget Process

The method of increasing funding levels for individual councils is through a contestable funding application at the April budget setting meeting. Applications can be for either a one-off funding allocation for a specific project, or for ongoing additional funding. The latter in effect raises the total baseline funding level for that council.

The funding required to cover base funds and approved contestable funding is assessed against the expected licence sales for the year ahead (established from analysis of the last two-year sales trends, considering the implications of COVID-19 and border restrictions) to determine the licence fees.

This process is summarised in the following budget cycle:

Feb	<p>All council budgets reviewed against audited actual expenditure. Budgets over or under 10% variance are reported against, reviewed, and discussed. The variance reports for the 2022/23 year are prepared and discussed.</p> <p>NZC set regional base funds for the 2024/25 year at \$11,867,408. NZC recommended to all Regions to make reductions of 3% from their Base funds.</p>
March	<p>Preparation of business and operational work plans for new financial year (NFY).</p> <p>Draft budgets developed by NZC and regional councils.</p> <p>Regions and NZC made savings of \$192,183.</p>
April	<p>Councils apply for 'new' contestable funding with applications circulated beforehand, reviewed against criteria, considered, and prioritised at the meeting</p>
	<p>NZC meet (by Zoom) with the Chairs of each region to consider the contestable funding applications.</p>
April	<p>NZC make recommendation on licence forecast, fees, having considered base funding levels and contestable fund applications, and send to regional councils for consideration.</p>
May	<p>Regional councils consider NZC licence fee recommendation. Due back to NZC (31 May).</p>
June	<p>NZC consider regional response and finalise licence fee recommendations for approval by the Minister of Conservation. (19 June)</p>

The recommended licence fee is effectively set by dividing the sum of the proposed budgets of the 13 Councils by the number of the adult whole season licence equivalents that Fish and Game NZ expects to sell during the year (LEQ targets).

2024/25 Licence LEQ Forecast

The following table represents the approved forecast for the Licence sales for Fish and Game for the 2024/25 season. Total LEQ Fish 72,826 and Game 31,340.

The forecast which was recommended by the Licence Working Party.

	Actual 2021/22		Actual 2022/23		Est 2024	Budget 2023/24		Projected 24/25	
	Fish	Game	Fish	Game	Fish	Fish	Game	Fish	Game
Northland	217	1,582	455	1,552	454	370	1,552	454	1,537
Auckland\Waikato	3,231	6,309	3,550	6,518	3,658	3,729	6,201	3,658	6,518
Eastern	8,695	3,024	8,643	2,854	8,456	8,663	3,012	8,363	2,769
Hawkes Bay	2,476	1,916	2,525	1,750	2,335	1,879	1,916	2,690	1,667
Taranaki	861	1,114	1,034	1,086	987	938	1,113	964	1,072
Wellington	3,239	3,409	2,990	3,290	2,989	2,807	3,409	2,989	3,231
Nelson-Marlb	3,460	900	4,410	862	4,364	4,599	887	4,341	843
Nth Canterbury	10,980	2,428	11,084	2,557	10,964	11,148	2,381	10,904	2,557
West Coast	1,744	370	2,253	364	2,169	2,208	358	2,127	361
Central SI	11,638	2,235	12,946	2,267	12,536	12,937	2,233	12,331	2,267
Otago	14,923	4,080	15,828	3,989	15,549	15,614	4,029	15,410	3,944
Southland	8,099	4,727	9,084	4,625	8,758	9,167	4,672	8,595	4,574
NZC only									
National									
TOTAL	69,563	32,094	74,802	31,714	73,219	74,060	31,763	72,826	31,340

Following Components Featured in the 2024/25 Budget Discussions:

Contestable Funding Applications

59 contestable funding applications were received (90 last year), seeking additional funding of \$2,200,596 (last year \$2,965,090).

National Budget	# Applications	\$ from Licence fee	\$ from Reserves	CF for Salaries	CF for REM	CF for new Staff
Northland	2	12,974	-	10,974	10,974	
Auckland\Waikato	0	-	-	-	-	
Eastern	2	26,600	15,000	26,600	26,600	
Hawkes Bay	2	154,000	-	54,000	54,000	
Taranaki	2	29,333	-	29,333	8,124	21,209
Wellington	1	17,788	-	17,788	17,788	
Nelson-Marlb	0	-	-	-	-	
Nth Canterbury	5	103,748	30,000	31,748	31,748	
West Coast	2	34,350	25,000	59,350	59,350	
Central SI	3	237,500	29,601	190,000		190,000
Otago	3	120,000	23,000	115,000		115,000
Southland	5	19,427	136,775	75,702	10,427	65,275
NZC only	7	110,400	-	-		
National	25	1,075,100	-	160,000		160,000
TOTAL	59	1,941,220	259,376	770,495	219,011	551,484
TOTAL Contestable Funding Applications		2,200,596				

Contestable Funding Recommendations from NZC Staff

The NZC staff made recommendations to the NZC in 3 Steps:

1. Step 1: Prioritisation for Regional Contestable fund applications for salaries and core functions;
2. Step 2: Recommendations for NZC and National Budgets for core functions;
3. Step 3: Recommendation of the Regional Contestable applications and the NZC and

National applications against the Fish & Game Organisational Strategy – strategic merit.

2024/25 NZC Contestable Funding Approval and 2024/25 Budgets

Budgets for all councils were received and circulated to the NZC for review prior to the April NZC meeting.

The Chairs of the Regions were invited to present their CFs to the NZC on Friday 19th April.

The NZC approved contestable funding applications at a total value of \$1,580,496. Of this, \$624,161 were ongoing from the Licence fee, \$596,959 were one off from the Licence fee and \$359,376 were one-off from reserves.

The attached Table 6 (Appendix 1) sets out the full list of approved contestable funding applications with the approval rating from the NZC staff and the final approval from the NZC. Any figures highlighted in yellow have been adjusted from the original application during the Contestable funding review process or at the NZC meeting.

Reasoning behind the decisions include:

1. Salaries for REM – have all been approved in principle – as the NZC believe our people are our greatest assets. However, the amounts sort in the CF's need to peer reviewed by the HR advisor to ensure the amounts are in line with the REM policy i.e. there is parity/ equity across the organisation for staff.
 - a. The process this year is that the market information from the March Strategic Pay survey will be available around mid May. Jane will then notify Chairs/ Managers of the new pay bands and will send out a spreadsheet to those who have asked for CF funds for remuneration. Jane will work with the Chair/ Manager to schedule a meeting to chat through regional recommendations for salaries. Pay parity can then be checked and the additional budget required can be confirmed.
 - b. Once this review has been completed, the relevant Regions will be notified of the final approval from the CF fund for Rem.
 - c. In future, as NZC has only approved a budget for one Strategic Pay report in the next financial year, we will use the September 2024 report to calculate the remuneration budget for the 25/26 financial year.
 - d. Strategic Pay will calculate new pay bands in early December from the September survey , so the HR/HS advisor can then send out a spreadsheet to Regions where you can identify where you think you will want to place your staff within the bands, and the required remuneration can be calculated well before the April NZC meeting.
2. All CF's from Regional reserves were approved.
3. Northland - \$2,000 for insurance was declined as the NZC feels this amount could be found within the present Northland budget, and due to significant organisational fiscal constraints.

4. Hawkes Bay \$100,000 has been approved from reserves as a one off. It is the intention of the HBFGC to ensure this project is self-sustaining in the following years.
5. Taranaki – Management Contract - \$21,209 – Approved as a one off and for the budget to be reconsidered in the following year.
6. North Canterbury – Put and Take Fishery – NZC approved \$5,000 as per the current year budget. The value of the put and take fishery project was noted as high against the Organisational Strategy, though unfortunately further funding could not be provided at this stage due to tight organisational fiscal constraints. Te Waihora Maimai \$9,000 was approved as a one off as the NZC have requested the North Canterbury Council to investigate alternative funding for this, for example a Maimai fee to those using the maimai's. The ARF figure was approved as per the current year budget \$20,000 (one off) with the NZC requesting all Regions ARF registers are reviewed against ARF policy to ensure all Regions are adequately funded.
7. Central South Island – Applied for 2 staff members – the NZC approved 1 staff member, after considering the regional needs to support the canals fisheries, and level of staffing across similar sized regions. This was the second year CSI had sought an additional field officer to support delivery of their operational plan and in particular to meet the needs of managing the canal fisheries;
8. Otago - \$5,000 for the Council Induction was not approved as this will be funded by the NZC budget. The new staff member was declined due to financial constraints, though as with North Canterbury's put and take fishery, the strategic value of this position was noted as high against the Organisational Strategy.
9. Southland – CF's from Reserves approved and the Parrie and swan counts costs were reinstated.
10. NZC - \$20,000 for NZC meetings not approved as they look to move to online and 1-day meetings to save money. Staff expenses reduced to \$10,000 due to financial constraints. Advocacy for Fish and Game \$37,500 was reinstated (as this was originally reduced with the 3% cuts). The NZC were committed to the Governance Advisor and approved \$20,000 for this as part of the commitment to undertake the non-legislative recommendations of the Ministerial Review, and in supporting the organisation through this period of change.
11. National – Many of the National CF applications were due to increased costs for providing core regional services and as such were approved – for example, the increase in office 365 and data costs, election costs, postage increases for the postage of the licences and increased costs of hosting face to face managers meetings.
 - a. The Health and Safety Risk management system was given a priority as the NZC considered that the implementation of a robust H & S system used by all of Fish and Game was vital.
 - b. Approval was given for the Website and Social media project \$30,000 which aims to

design and delivery extension resources for hunters and anglers as part of the commitment to adding value for Licence holders and in underpinning the organisations R³ program – initial focus on recruitment and reactivation.

- c. The NZC Staff submitted a CF for National Liaison (\$40k) and Marketing & Social Licence (80K). The NZC approved a total of \$30,000 across both projects with the direction to the CEO to use this funding either in National Liaison and or Marketing and Social licence. \$90,000 declined due to prioritisation of regional needs within tight fiscal constraints.
- d. The Research budget was reinstated to the \$100k (as this was originally reduced with the 3% cuts)
- e. A reduction in the National Base funding of \$50,000 was approved (this was part of the Regulations budget) to make additional funds available. The NZC made a decision to no longer print regulation guides, but to have these provided as a link and a PDF only.
- f. The \$50,000 reduction from the Regulations budget was approved to be used as a one off for the Scoping of the Digital licence for 2024/25.
- g. The HR/HS position that was funded as a one off in 2023/24 was approved but at .6FTE rather than the .8 FTE that was originally applied for.
- h. Governor Training and induction was approved at \$30,000.
- i. The application for a .5 FTE for research was declined.

12. There were two major projects that were considered by the NZC, that were not affordable within the Licence fee – these 2 projects were for the magazine \$235,000 and for the Regional RMA (Resource Management Act) Fund \$200,000. The NZC recognised the significance of these 2 projects – both have been approved as one offs for 2024/25 and will come from regional reserves.

The proposed budget for the 13 Fish and Game councils for 2024/25 (including funding from reserves) is \$13,255,720. Individual budgets are shown in the Table 3 below alongside the previous financial year (both shown as GST exclusive).

Table 3: National Approved Budget -DRAFT

	Base Funds 2024/25	Approved CF Licence Fee ongoing	Approved CF from Licence Fee - One off	Approved CF from Reserves - One off	Approved Budget 2024/25 (inc from Reserves)
Northland	581,107	10,974	0	0	592,081
Auckland/Waikato	881,824	0	0	0	881,824
Eastern	1,278,944	26,600	0	15,000	1,320,544
Hawkes Bay	380,624	54,000	0	100,000	534,624
Taranaki	419,692	8,124	21,209	0	449,025
Wellington	830,600	17,788	0	0	848,388
Nelson-Marlb	564,125	0	0	0	564,125
Nth Canterbury	973,187	36,748	29,000	30,000	1,068,935
West Coast	341,601	34,350	0	25,000	400,951
Central SI	850,235	95,000	23,750	29,601	998,586
Otago	1,240,967	0	0	23,000	1,263,967
Southland	803,632	19,427	0	136,775	959,834
NZC only	1,203,086	77,400	0	0	1,280,486
National 1	1,325,600	243,750	523,000	0	2,092,350
TOTAL	11,675,224	624,161	596,959	359,376	13,255,720

1

Research Fund Allocation

To avoid inflating the budget in any one year an allocation is made annually to the Research Fund. The annual Research Budget (\$155k) has been split between General Research (\$100k), the National Anglers Survey (\$30k) and the Research for PhD (Cawthron \$25k).

The National Research Budget was reduced by \$41,000 (to make the 3% savings) This was reinstated by the NZC within the CF approval process.

There were no applications to this Research Fund.

Staff Development Fund

A staff scholarship of \$10,000 is available annually for Fish and Game staff to apply for support from the organisation for national and international study, work experience or participation in events or conferences.

There were two applications to this fund for the 2024/25 year.

¹ National issues include the cost of shared services benefiting the organisation nationwide, such as the special editions of the FISH AND GAME magazine, the FISH AND GAME NZ website, licence administration system, administration of elections, ranger health & safety training, etc.

1. Hamish Stevens (CSI) \$2,500 – to attend the Biennial Bay Delta Science Conference in San Francisco
2. Beginner te Reo Māori online classes for 20x F & G staff \$6,600 (applied for by Maggie Tait)

Following the recommendations from the Managers, the application from Hamish Stevens was approved to the total value of \$2,500.

RMA/Legal Fund Allocation

The RMA/Legal fund receives budget allocations on a reimbursement basis. It covers payment of costs through a national fund rather than separate funding allocations in individual council's budgets where approved legal projects occur.

It was agreed that contestable funding of \$200,000 be allocated to the national legal pool fund for this 2024/25 year. This will be funded from reserves.

The NZC approved from the RMA fund

- \$10,215 to work on inputs control form the NPSFM (National Policy Statement Freshwater Management) project.
- \$30,000 for Hawkes Bay for Tranche 2.
- \$50,000 towards RMA reform and NPS _ FM.
- And 65,000 from Hawkes Bay Reserves for Tranche 2.

Licence Fee Recommendations

NZC Licence Fee Recommendation

At the February 2024 NZC meeting, the NZC indicated that they intended for the licence fee to remain at \$153 and \$113 as they believed that the minister would, be accepting of this price.

The NZC recommend that the 2024/25 licence fee be based on a sports fish adult whole season fee of \$153 and the game adult whole season licence \$113 (inclusive of the Game Bird Habitat Stamp) (GST inclusive) and for all other licence categories to increase proportionally. The Salmon licence \$5, the Designated Waters Licence \$5 for residents and \$40 for Non-residents. This represents no increase on last year.

The NZC recommended that the Sports Fish and Game licence categories be maintained at the same ratios as previous years.

Recommended licence fees are set out in the schedule 2 at the end of this letter.

Total income including interest is \$12,463,441. The Cost of Sales (COS) is the commission and bank transaction charges relating to the sale of licences is budgeted at 4.0% of licence income.

Table 4: Total Income Summary 2024/25					
TOTAL Licence Income \$					
			Net Licence		
	TOTAL F & G	Total COS \$	Income \$	Interest \$	Net Income
Northland	204,746	8,190	196,556	10,104	206,660
Auckland/Waikato	1,098,798	43,952	1,054,846	17,768	1,072,615
Eastern	1,372,688	54,908	1,317,780	34,340	1,352,120
Hawkes Bay	514,440	20,578	493,862	35,630	529,492
Taranaki	228,929	9,157	219,772	9,032	228,804
Wellington	701,100	28,044	673,056	10,984	684,040
Nelson-Marlb	656,710	26,268	630,442	7,419	637,861
Nth Canterbury	1,690,842	67,634	1,623,208	13,367	1,636,575
West Coast	316,886	12,675	304,211	15,470	319,681
Central SI	1,853,460	74,138	1,779,322	44,444	1,823,766
Otago	2,420,593	96,824	2,323,769	57,966	2,381,735
Southland	1,573,067	62,923	1,510,144	39,923	1,550,068
NZC only				40,025	40,025
National					
TOTAL	12,632,259	505,290	12,126,969	336,472	12,463,441

NZ Game Bird Habitat Stamp

The NZC recommended the Game Bird Habitat Stamp for 2023/24 remain at \$5.

Modification to Licence Categories and Ratios with whole Season Fees

The NZ Council agreed that the sports fish categories and ratios be maintained the same as previous years.

Overall Forecast Position and Use of Reserves

The recommendation for licence fee of \$153 and \$113, along with the recommendation of a total budget of \$13,255,720 creates an overall deficit of \$792,279.

Table 5: Overall Forecast Position for Fish and Game	
For the Year ended 31 August 2025	
Net Licence Sales	12,126,969
Interest	336,472
Total Income	12,463,441
Less Approved Budget	13,255,720
Total Surplus/(Deficit)	(792,279)

Approval for regions to use their reserves to cover one off projects for the year totals \$359,376. Additionally, regions are required to use their reserves to cover the shortfall of \$432,903. This latter amount represents an additional 3.36% use of reserves. (\$359,376 plus \$432,903 equals the total LICENCE FEE RECOMMENDATION 2024-25

deficit of \$792,279).

Forecasts as at April 2024 suggest one region, North Canterbury may fall below the 20% reserves and require a top up of \$12,247 in the 2025/26 contestable funding round. This forecast however, is based on Regions working within the 2023/24 budgets.

Conclusion

The NZ Council seeks consultation from Fish and Game regional councils on the following points:

1. **The licence fees and categories as set out in the appended schedule (Appendix 2) and specifically:**
 - a. **That the 2024/25 adult whole season sports fish licence fee is set at \$153 and that the adult whole season game licence is set at \$113 (inclusive of a \$5 fee for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp), with all proportional changes to remaining licence fees**
 - b. **The Licence LEQ of 72,826 (Fish) and 31,340 (Game)**

To enable the NZC to consider feedback and make recommendations to the Minister of Conservation at its 18 June 2023 meeting, responses to these changes are requested to be submitted by the close of business on **31 May 2024**.



Barrie Barnes
Chairman
New Zealand Fish and Game Council



Corina Jordan
Chief Executive
New Zealand Fish and Game Council

APPENDIX 1

Table 6 : Contestable Fund Applications Detail 2024-25 - 432,903

Summary of Decisions from NZC meeting

App No	Region Base Funding 2024/25	Project Code	Description	L R O C	B	Additional \$ Sought	\$ amount Adjusted	Staff Recommendation	NZC Recommendation	1 Not	2 Good To	3 Recommend	4 Essential	5 Whole	Withdrawn	APPROVED Ongoing Licence Fee	APPROVED One Off Licence Fee	APPROVED Restore Reserves	APPROVED Capital EX	APPROVED from Reserves	
	Northland																				
	\$ 581,107	1910	Salaries	L B		10,974	10,974	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NTH 001		1994	Insurance	L B		2,000	2,000	1	1	2,000	0	0	0	0	0	10,974	0	0	0	0	0
NTH 002				L B		12,974	12,974			2,000	0	0	0	0	0	10,974	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL Northland																				
	Auckland/Waikato																				
	\$ 881,824		No CF bids			0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL Auckland/Waikato																				
	Eastern																				
	\$ 1,278,944	1910	Salaries	L B		26,600	26,600	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EAST 001		1114	Lake Tarawera	R O		15,000	15,000	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	26,600	0	0	0	0	0
EAST 002				R O		15,000	15,000			0	0	0	0	0	0	15,000	0	0	0	0	15,000
	TOTAL Eastern					41,600	41,600			0	0	0	0	0	0	26,600	0	0	0	0	15,000
	Hawke's Bay																				
	\$ 380,624	1910	Salaries	L B		54,000	54,000	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HBAY 001		1464	Education Centre Development	R O		100,000	100,000	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	54,000	0	0	0	0	0
HBAY 002				R O		154,000	154,000			0	0	0	0	0	0	100,000	0	0	0	0	100,000
	TOTAL Hawke's Bay					154,000	154,000			0	0	0	0	0	0	54,000	0	0	0	0	100,000
	Taranaki																				
	\$ 419,692	1912	Continuation of Management	L O		21,209	21,209	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TARA 001		1911	Salaries	L B		8,124	8,124	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,124	0	0	0	0	0
TARA 002				L B		29,333	29,333			0	0	0	0	0	0	8,124	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL Taranaki					29,333	29,333			0	0	0	0	0	0	8,124	0	0	0	0	0
	Wellington																				
	\$ 830,600	1911	Salaries	L B		17,788	17,788	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WELL 001				L B		17,788	17,788			0	0	0	0	0	0	17,788	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL Wellington					17,788	17,788			0	0	0	0	0	0	17,788	0	0	0	0	0
	Nelson/Marlborough																				
	\$ 564,125		No CF Bids	L B		0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N/A				L B		0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL Nelson/Marlborough					0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	North Canterbury																				
	\$ 973,187	1911	Salaries	L B		31,748	31,748	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NC 001		1161	Put & Take Fishery	L B		23,000	5,000	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	31,748	0	0	0	0	0
NC 002		1232	Te Waihora Maimai Aqt	L O		9,000	9,000	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0
NC 003		ARF	Asset Replacement Fund	L O		40,000	20,000	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,000	9,000	0	0	0	0
NC 004		1112	Trout Fishery/Designated W/F	R O		30,000	30,000	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	20,000	0	0	0	0	0
NC 005				R O		133,748	95,748			0	0	0	0	0	30,000	0	0	0	0	0	30,000
	TOTAL North Cant					133,748	95,748			0	0	0	0	0	0	36,748	29,000	0	0	0	30,000
	West Coast																				
	\$ 341,601	1910	Salaries	L B		34,350	34,350	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WC 001				R O		25,000	25,000	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	34,350	0	0	0	0	0
WC 002				R O		59,350	59,350			0	0	0	0	0	0	34,350	0	0	0	0	25,000
	TOTAL West Coast					59,350	59,350			0	0	0	0	0	0	34,350	0	0	0	0	25,000

Table 6 : Contestable Fund Applications Detail 2024-25 - 432,903

Summary of Decisions from NZC meeting																				
Region	Project Code	Description	L R O C	B O C	Additional \$ Sought	\$ amount \$ Adjusted	Staff Recommendation	NZC Recommendation	1 Not	2 Good To	3 Recommend/Inde	4 Essential Whole	5 Withdrawn	APPROVED Licence Fee	APPROVED One Off Licence Fee	APPROVED Restore Reserves	APPROVED Capital EX	APPROVED from Reserves		
Central South Island																				
\$ 850,235																				
CSI 001	CAP	Electric Fishing Machine	R C	R C	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CSI 002	1910	Salaries	L B	L B	29,601	29,601	4	4	0	0	0	29,601	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29,601
CSI 002	1912	Staff Expenses	L O	L O	190,000	95,000	4	4	0	0	0	95,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
					47,500	23,750	4	4	0	0	0	23,750	0	23,750	0	0	0	0	0	0
					267,101	148,351			0	0	0	148,351	0	23,750	0	0	0	0	0	29,601
TOTAL Central South Island																				
Otago																				
\$ 1,240,967																				
OTG 001	1700	Council Elections & Meetings	L O	L O	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTG 002	1911	Advocacy/PR/Strategic Relia	L B	L B	5,000	5,000	4	3	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTG 003	1321	Designated Waters Impleme	R O	R O	115,000	115,000	4	4	0	0	115,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
					23,000	23,000	4	4	0	0	0	23,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23,000
TOTAL Otago					143,000	143,000			5,000	0	115,000	23,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23,000
Southland																				
\$ 803,632																				
STH 001	1900	Salaries	L B	L B	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
STH 002	1115	Maintain Te Anau House	R O	R O	10,427	10,427	4	4	0	0	0	10,427	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
STH 003	1115	Maintain Angler Access Bright	R O	R O	61,500	61,500	4	4	0	0	0	61,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	61,500
STH 004	1115	Parrie and swan counts	L B	L B	10,000	10,000	4	4	0	0	0	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,000
STH 005	1710	Salaries from DW Reserve	R O	R O	9,000	9,000	4	4	0	0	0	9,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
					65,275	65,275	4	4	0	0	0	65,275	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	65,275
TOTAL Southland					156,202	156,202			0	0	0	156,202	0	19,427	0	0	0	0	0	136,775
NZC																				
\$ 1,203,086																				
NZC 001	1700	Governance Forum Chairs/N	L B	L B	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZC 002	1700	NZC Chair Travel	L B	L B	3,000	3,000	4	4	3,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZC 003	1700	NZC Meetings	L B	L B	7,000	7,000	4	4	0	0	0	7,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZC 004	1820	Financial Audit Fee	L B	L B	20,000	10,000	2	2	0	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZC 005	1920	Staff Expenses	L B	L B	3,000	3,000	4	4	0	0	0	3,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZC 007	1430	Advocacy for Fish & Game	L B	L B	20,000	10,000	4	4	0	0	0	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZC 009	1700	Governance Advisor	L B	L B	37,400	37,400	4	4	0	0	0	37,400	0	37,400	0	0	0	0	0	0
					20,000	20,000	3	4	0	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL NZC					110,400	90,400			3,000	10,000	0	77,400	0	77,400	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 6 : Contestable Fund Applications Detail 2024-25 - 432,903

Summary of Decisions from NZC meeting

App No	Region Base Funding 2024/25	Project Code	Description	L R O C	A B C	Additional \$ Sought	\$ amount \$ Adjusted	Staff Recommendation	NZC Recommendation	1 Not	2 Good To	3 Recommend	4 Essential Whole	5 Withdrawn	APPROVED Ongoing Licence Fee	APPROVED One Off Licence Fee	APPROVED Restore Reserves	APPROVED Capital EX	APPROVED from Reserves
NAT 001	National \$1,325,600	1614	Licence Audit Fee	L	B	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 002		1822	Maritime Compliance	L	B	2,500	2,500	4	4	0	0	0	2,500	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 003		1422	Information Technology - Nat	L	B	10,000	10,000	4	4	0	0	0	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 004		1240	RMA Fund	L	O	18,000	18,000	4	4	0	0	0	18,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 005		1711	Election Costs	L	O	200,000	200,000	4	4	0	0	0	200,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 005		1711	Election Costs	L	O	15,000	15,000	4	4	0	0	0	15,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 005		1711	Election Costs	L	B	7,500	7,500	4	4	0	0	0	7,500	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 006		1332	Fish and Game Magazine	L	O	235,000	235,000	4	4	0	0	0	235,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 007		1170	Reg Guides	L	B	4,100	4,100	4	1	4,100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 008		1630	Licence Production	L	B	40,000	40,000	4	4	0	0	0	40,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 009		1810	Managers meetings	L	B	33,000	8,000	3	4	0	0	0	8,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 010		1820	Health & Safety - Risk Mngt	L	B	5,000	5,000	3	4	0	0	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 010		1820	Health & Safety - Risk Mngt	L	O	3,000	3,000	3	4	0	0	0	3,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 011		1423	Website and Social Media	L	B	30,000	30,000	4	4	0	0	0	30,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 012		1430	National Liaison	L	B	40,000	10,000	4	4	0	0	0	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 013		1442	Marketing and Social Licence	L	B	80,000	20,000	4	4	0	0	0	20,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 014		1460	Research	L	B	41,000	41,000	4	4	0	0	0	41,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 015		1815	Co-ordination HR - travel	L	B	5,000	5,000	3	3	0	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 016		1820	Strategic Pay reports	L	B	6,000	3,000	4	4	0	0	0	3,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 017		1620	Reduction of Baseline - Regu	L	B	0	(50,000)	4	4	0	0	0	(50,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 018		1620	Scoping of Digital Licence - L	L	O	50,000	50,000	4	4	0	0	0	50,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 018		1830	Consultant Amalgamation - F	L	O	10,000	10,000	4	1	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 019		1835	Cost optimisation follow up	L	O	20,000	20,000	4	4	0	0	0	20,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 020		1840	Culture and PD for all F & G	L	B	20,000	20,000	3	3	0	0	20,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 021		1850	National H & Safety training	L	B	5,000	5,000	3	3	0	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAT 022		1100	Sports Fish & Game bird stal	L	B	5,000	5,000	4	4	0	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZC 006 NAT 023		1910	Salaries - HR/HS Advisor	L	B	85,000	63,750	4	4	0	0	0	63,750	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZC 008 NAT 024		1700	Governor Training and induct	L	B	30,000	30,000	4	4	0	0	30,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZC 010 NAT 025		1910	Salaries - Research	L	B	75,000	75,000	3	3	0	0	75,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL National						1,075,100	885,850			14,100	0	105,000	766,750	0	243,750	523,000	0	0	0
TOTAL						\$ 2,200,596	\$1,834,596			\$ 24,100	\$ 10,000	\$ 220,000	\$ 1,580,496	\$ -	\$ 624,161	\$ 596,959	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 359,376

APPENDIX 2

Schedule of FISH AND GAME NZ's proposed Licence & Fees for 2024/25 (inclusive of GST)

Sports Fish Licence		2023/24	2024/25	
Category of licence	Applicant Class	Current fee \$	Proposed fee\$	Fee difference
Whole season (1 Oct – 30 Sep)	Adult	153	153	Nil
	Junior	31	31	Nil
	Child	free	free	Nil
Family		198	198	Nil
Non-resident Whole season	Adult	264	264	Nil
	Junior	50	50	Nil
	Child	50	50	Nil
Winter (1 Apr – 30 Sep)	Adult	92	92	Nil
Loyal senior	Adult	130	130	Nil
Local area	Adult	122	122	Nil
Short break	Adult	55	55	Nil
Long-break	Adult	107	107	Nil
Day	Adult	24	24	Nil
	Junior	5	5	Nil
Non-resident Day	Adult	37	37	Nil
	Junior	22	22	Nil
	Child	22	22	Nil
Controlled period		free	free	Nil
Sea Run Salmon		\$5	\$5	Nil
Designated Waters- resident	Season	\$5	\$5	Nil
Designated Waters- non-resident	Day	\$40	\$40	Nil

Game Bird Licence*		2024	2025	
Category of licence	Applicant Class	Current fee \$	Proposed fee\$	Fee difference
Whole season (primarily 1st Sat in May to 31 Aug)	Adult	113	113	Nil
	Junior	26	26	Nil
	Child	5	5	Nil
Day (available from 2nd Monday of season)	Adult	26	26	Nil
	Junior	10	10	Nil

All licence category fees are set as a percentage of the fish or game adult whole season fee and rounded to the nearest \$, hence in some instances the fee difference remains nil.

*Game bird hunting licence fee includes the \$5 NZ Game Bird Habitat Stamp.

Notes:

- A junior means a person aged 12 years or over, but under 18 years at the start of the season.
- A child means a person aged under 12 years at the start of the season.
- Designated Waters, Sea Run Salmon and Controlled-Period licence entitles an adult or junior whole season or family fish licence holder to fish in specified waters or for specified species.
- Whole Season for sports fish extends from 1 October through to 30 September the following year.
- Whole Season for game birds can extend from the first Saturday in May to beyond the traditional closing dates for upland game hunting at the end of August due to special season conditions between February to April the following year for some species, e.g. Paradise shelduck and Pukeko.
- A Game Bird Habitat Stamp fee of \$5.00 (incl. GST) is payable on all categories of game hunting licence and is included in the fees shown in the game hunting licence table above.

Insights from the 2023/24 angler monitoring program: upper Mataura and Waikaia rivers



An angler crossing an access stile at the Rocky Beat on the upper Mataura River, Southland.

Summary

Over the last decade, the Southland Fish & Game Council has received ongoing complaints from anglers regarding crowding on the mid/upper Mataura and Waikaia rivers.

During the 2023/24 season, Southland Fish & Game initiated a monitoring programme to assess angler activity on the Mataura and Waikaia rivers.

The objectives of this programme were to ensure compliance with licencing requirements, assess how much angling pressure these rivers receive and how much of that angling pressure comes from resident and non-resident anglers.

Compliance with licencing requirements was notably high (ca. 99%). A total of eight FWL offences were detected, and non-resident anglers were responsible for seven of those offences.

Angling pressure varied by month, and was highest in January, February, and March. During these months, 61-73% of angling pressure was attributed to non-resident anglers.

Beat occupancy rates during February and March ranged from 0% to 90% and were affected by weather and river conditions.

Evidence suggests some particularly popular fishing beats experienced daily or almost daily angling activity raising concerns regarding the potential impact on fish behaviour, catchability, and subsequently, angler satisfaction. Interactions with anglers supported this proposition, revealing very low catch rates, and a degree of frustration and dissatisfaction amongst some anglers, particularly non-guided non-resident anglers.

Requiring anglers to have a Designated Waters Licence on these fisheries is likely to reduce pressure through the peak periods and cause some non-resident anglers to select alternate fisheries. This should reduce displacement of resident anglers, improve catchability and condition of trout, and ensure an improved angling experience for both resident and non-resident anglers.

Introduction and background

In response to an increasing number of concerns raised by anglers regarding crowding on some Southland fisheries, a focused effort has been underway to understand and address the issue. This endeavour has involved systematic attempts to quantify angler use of, and displacement from pressure-sensitive fisheries as well as comprehensive angler surveys aimed at understanding angler perceptions around crowding and opinions regarding potential management mechanisms. A significant outcome of this work was the establishment of the Designated Waters Licence for the 2023/24 season and its application to the upper Oreti trout fishery as a mechanism to reduce angling pressure and therefore crowding.

In Southland, two fisheries that have received increasing numbers of angler complaints regarding crowding are the mid/upper Mataura River (hereafter upper Mataura) and the Waikaia River. To assess the veracity of these complaints, in 2018, the Southland and Otago Fish & Game Councils commissioned Dr Stu Hayes and Professor Brent Lovelock (Centre for Recreation Research, Department of Tourism, University of Otago) to undertake a comprehensive angler survey to assess angler displacement to and from selected pressure-sensitive fisheries in Southland and Otago. One of those selected fisheries was the upper Mataura. Hayes and Lovelock (2019) also assessed anglers' willingness to pay for management mechanisms to control angler pressure (crowding) on the upper Mataura.

Hayes and Lovelock (2019) found that temporal, spatial and absolute angler displacement was occurring because of crowding and poor angler etiquette and among users of the upper Mataura fishery, there was broad support for management mechanisms to control crowding. Among resident anglers, 78% either supported or were neutral about management mechanisms to control crowding, while among non-resident anglers, this figure was 72%. With regards to paying for management mechanisms to control crowding, 57% either supported or were neutral about paying for management mechanisms to address crowding. In general, resident anglers, particularly Southland residents, did not support having to pay for management mechanisms to control crowding on the mid/upper Mataura. Overall, Hayes and Lovelock (2019) determined the effects of crowding on angler displacement to be of 'moderate' concern for the mid/upper Mataura River.

To complement the data collected by Hayes and Lovelock (2019), during the summer of 2020, Southland Fish & Game also undertook an assessment of angler origins on the upper Mataura River (upstream of the Nokomai Gorge). Eighty-two percent of anglers encountered were non-resident. By way of comparison, during the summer of 2001, it was found that 68% of anglers on the upper Mataura were non-resident which suggests increasing non-resident angler pressure and/or resident angler displacement.

Following the findings from the Hayes and Lovelock (2019) angler displacement study, which highlighted concerns regarding crowding and support for management mechanisms to address crowding on the upper Mataura, Southland Fish & Game introduced a voluntary beat system for the 2023/24 season. This approach was adopted because it would assist with managing angler pressure by influence angler behaviour and thereby reducing conflict. The upper Mataura River (Ardlussa Bridge to the Roberts Creek confluence) was split into 43 beats ranging in length from 0.8km to 4.2km. With this system, anglers park next to a beat sign to indicate to other anglers they will be fishing on a particular beat.

Recognising the importance of pressure-sensitive fisheries management in Southland, the Southland Fish & Game Council has prioritised pressure-sensitive fisheries monitoring and management and have instructed staff build upon the existing work that has already been conducted. Specifically, the Council instructed staff to develop monitoring programmes for both the mid-to-upper reaches of the Mataura River and the Waikaia River to gain deeper insights into angler behaviour. The 2023/24 upper Mataura and Waikaia monitoring programme aimed to:

- 1.) Ensure a high level of angler compliance with licencing requirements.
- 2.) Determine the origin of anglers who fish on the upper Mataura and Waikaia rivers to evaluate non-resident and resident angler use.
- 3.) Monitor beat occupancy rates to determine the degree of angling pressure on each river.

Methods

The monitoring programme commenced in October 2023 on the upper Mataura River and in January 2024 on the Waikaia River.

Angler Compliance

To assess angler compliance with fishing licence requirements, staff checked angler fishing licences according to standard procedures, with all licence checks recorded by date, fishery, and licence type. Whole-season compliance rates were determined for each fishery and by licence category (resident or non-resident angler).

Angler Origins

During fishing licence checks, staff recorded the origin (resident or non-resident) of each angler. At the end of each month, they compiled all licence checks and calculated the percentage of checks that were from resident and non-resident anglers. This enabled staff to

assess differences in both resident and non-resident angler pressure on these rivers over the course of the season.

Beat Occupancy

Beat monitoring data was collected during normal angling hours (10am-4pm), as this is when overcrowding is most likely to occur. When arriving at a beat location, the status of the fishing beat (occupied or not occupied) was recorded.

On the Mataura, 43 signposted fishing beats have been established: 31 above Nokomai Gorge and twelve below Nokomai Gorge. Given the impracticality of visiting all Mataura beats in a single day, only a portion of the beats were checked on any given day. Occupancy rates are calculated based on the total number of beats inspected on a given day.

The Waikaia River was split into thirteen 'monitoring beats' that were associated with typical angler access points. On most monitoring days, all thirteen beats were checked for anglers.

The proportion of beats occupied is expressed as a percentage (%) and was used as an index of angler pressure. For example, a 50% occupancy rate means 50% of the beats checked on a given day were occupied by an angler.

Beat occupancy rates were also determined for individual beats over the peak angling period of January-March. As such, if an individual beat has an occupancy rate of 50%, this meant that of the visits staff made to that beat over the peak angling period, there was an angler fishing on the beat on 50% of those visits.

Results and Discussion

Angler Compliance

Throughout the 2023/24 fishing season, a total of 353 licence checks were carried out on the upper Mataura River, while 256 checks were conducted on the Waikaia River. Five anglers were found fishing without a licence (FWL) on the Mataura River and three on the Waikaia River. Seven of these FWL offences were attributed to non-resident anglers. The overall compliance rates were ca. 99% for both the upper Mataura and Waikaia rivers indicating a very high level of angler compliance throughout the 2023/24 season.

Angler Origins

Analysis of angler origin data revealed disparity in angling pressure between non-resident and resident anglers across the monitored fisheries and months (Table 1, 2). Earlier in the season (October and November), a higher proportion of total monthly angling pressure came from

resident anglers (Table 1). However, during the peak angling period of January-March, between 61% and 73% of angler use was by non-resident anglers (Table 1, 2).

These angler origin results show that non-resident anglers are contributing most of the angling pressure during the peak summer period. On the Mataura River, this level of non-resident angler activity is not yet comparable to the pre-2020 Covid-19 boarder closure. In the summer of 2019/20, 82% of angling activity on the upper Mataura was from non-resident anglers. When interpreting these results, it's noteworthy that non-resident angler licence sales have not yet returned to pre-covid levels. In 2018/19, Southland sold 1,170 whole season non-resident adult licences and 1,567 non-resident adult day licences. This season (2023/24), Southland sold 751 whole season non-resident adult licences and 1,419 non-resident adult day licences. Because we have not yet reached pre-covid levels of non-resident angler tourism, it's likely angling pressure on these fisheries will be higher next season.

Table 1: The origin (resident or non-resident) of anglers found fishing on the upper Mataura River during the 2023/24 season.

Mataura River	Total checks	Resident	Non-resident
October	22	14 (64%)	8 (36%)
November	34	16 (47%)	18 (53%)
December	22	8 (36%)	14 (64%)
January	49	19 (39%)	30 (61%)
February	110	38 (35%)	72 (65%)
March	81	25 (31%)	56 (69%)
April	35	16 (46%)	19 (54%)

Table 2: The origin (resident or non-resident) of anglers found fishing on the Waikaia River during the 2023/24 season.

Waikaia River	Total checks	Resident	Non-resident
January	76	23 (30%)	53 (70%)
February	139	43 (30%)	96 (70%)
March	41	11 (27%)	30 (73%)

Beat Occupancy

Monitoring of angler fishing activity along both the Mataura and Waikaia rivers revealed distinct peaks in usage. Throughout the peak summer months of January-March, which aligns with heightened levels of non-resident angler activity, beat occupancy rates varied from approximately 0% to 70% on the Mataura and approximately 10% to 90% on the Waikaia. Instances of lower beat occupancy rates (< 20%) during these months typically coincided with unfavourable fishing conditions due to river discolouration or weather which was unsuitable for fishing. Figures 1-3 outline occupancy rates by river reach.

Analysis of pressure exerted on individual fishing beats revealed exceptionally high levels of angler activity on certain favoured beats. For instance, on the Mataura River, the Athol Bridge beat saw an occupancy rate of 92% while other favoured beats such as Rocky, Naylor's, Beehive and Cattleyard had an occupancy rate of at least 70% (Table 3). Staff also received a report from Bill Gordon (landowner near the Brightwater spring), that on one occasion, there were fourteen angling parties on the Brightwater at one time. On the Waikaia River, the Block Road access point saw an occupancy rate of 91% (Table 3) during the peak period. Similarly, other popular access points including the Block Road Bridge and Piano Flat Bridge had an occupancy rate of at least 60% (Table 4). These results show that it is likely that some popular fishing beats are experiencing angling pressure at least every second day, if not daily, during the peak January-March period.

The very high levels of pressure some beats experience raises concerns about the effect of angling pressure on the fishery itself. It is well established that intense angling pressure can affect trout behaviour and catchability (Young and Hayes 2004; Askey et al. 2006; Koeck et al. 2019; Lovén Wallerius et al. 2019). For example, a study conducted by Young and Hayes (2004) assessed the influence of angling pressure on two New Zealand brown trout fisheries with contrasting characteristics: the Ugly River and the Owen River. The Ugly River was characterised as a remote fishery with low angling pressure and provided a quality angling experience. In contrast, the Owen River was an accessible fishery with higher angler pressure but also offered a quality angling experience. Young and Hayes (2004) found that compared to the remote Ugly River, trout in the Owen River were more prone to spooking, harder to catch, and less visible to anglers, which they attributed to the heightened angling pressure. Similarly, Askey et al. (2006) assessed the impact of daily angling pressure on rainbow trout catch rates in small lakes in British Columbia. Askey et al. (2006) found that over the course of their study, catch rates in the heavily fished lake dropped significantly relative to control lakes (those that received less angling pressure).

Given that some beats on the Maitai and Waikato are receiving daily or almost daily angling pressure, it's highly probable that the elevated levels of angling pressure these beats receive is impacting fish behaviour and consequently the angling pressure may be compromising the angling experience. Our interactions with anglers supported this proposition, revealing very low catch rates, and a degree of frustration and dissatisfaction amongst some anglers, particularly non-guided non-resident anglers. It is also worth noting that during the Covid-19 border closure, angling pressure was significantly reduced on fisheries such as the Brightwater and upper Maitai and direct observations of staff during drift-dive surveys as well as anecdotal reports from anglers, suggested that the physical condition of trout was significantly improved during this period (Figure 4). This implies that trout behaviour and feeding patterns are being influenced by the degree of disturbance they are presently exposed to. While it is acknowledged that this is supposition, it is consistent with findings from international studies (Young and Hayes 2004; Askey et al. 2006; Koeck et al. 2019; Lovén Wallerius et al. 2019).

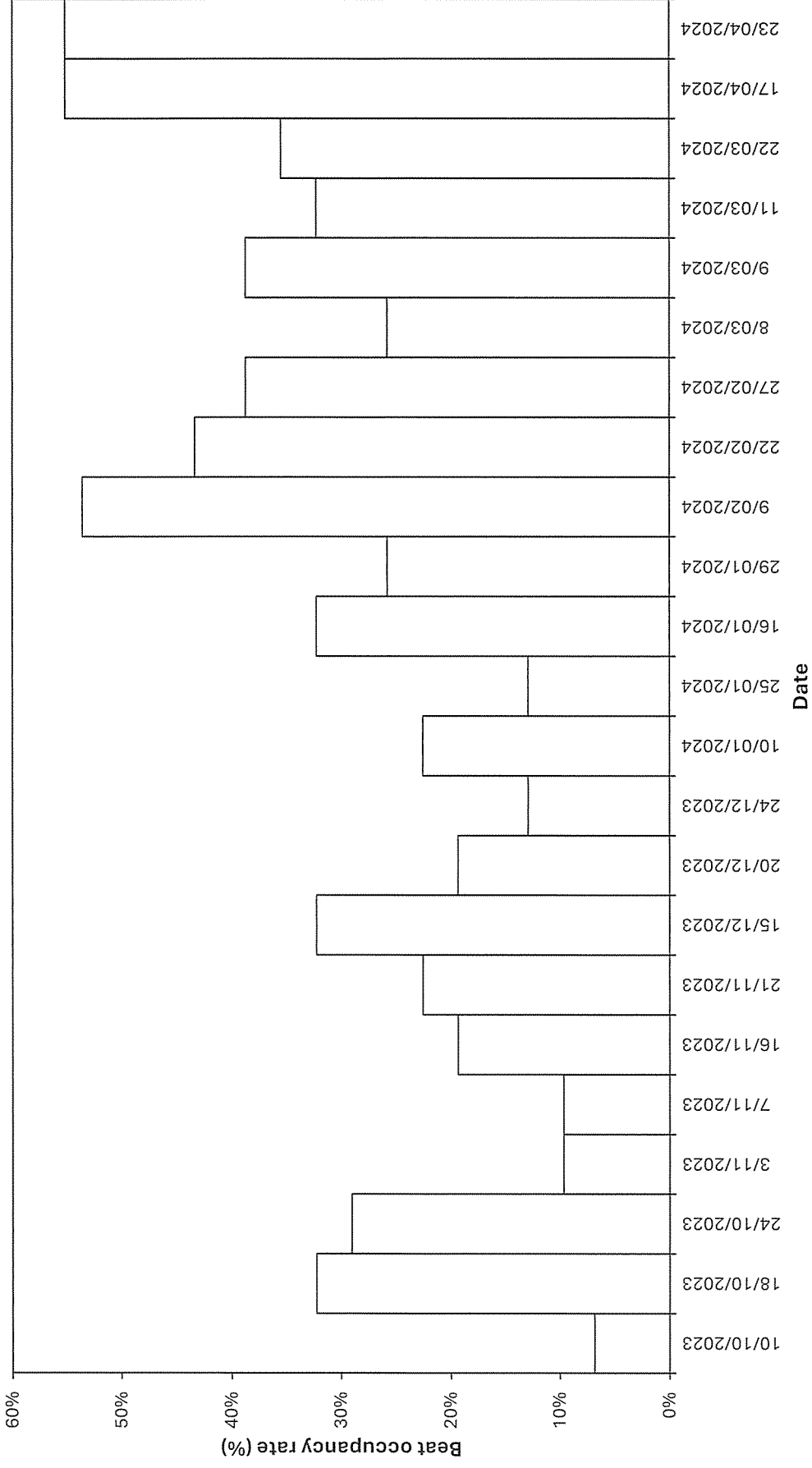


Figure 1: Beat occupancy rates for the upper Mataura River above Nokomai Gorge (October 2023-April 2024).

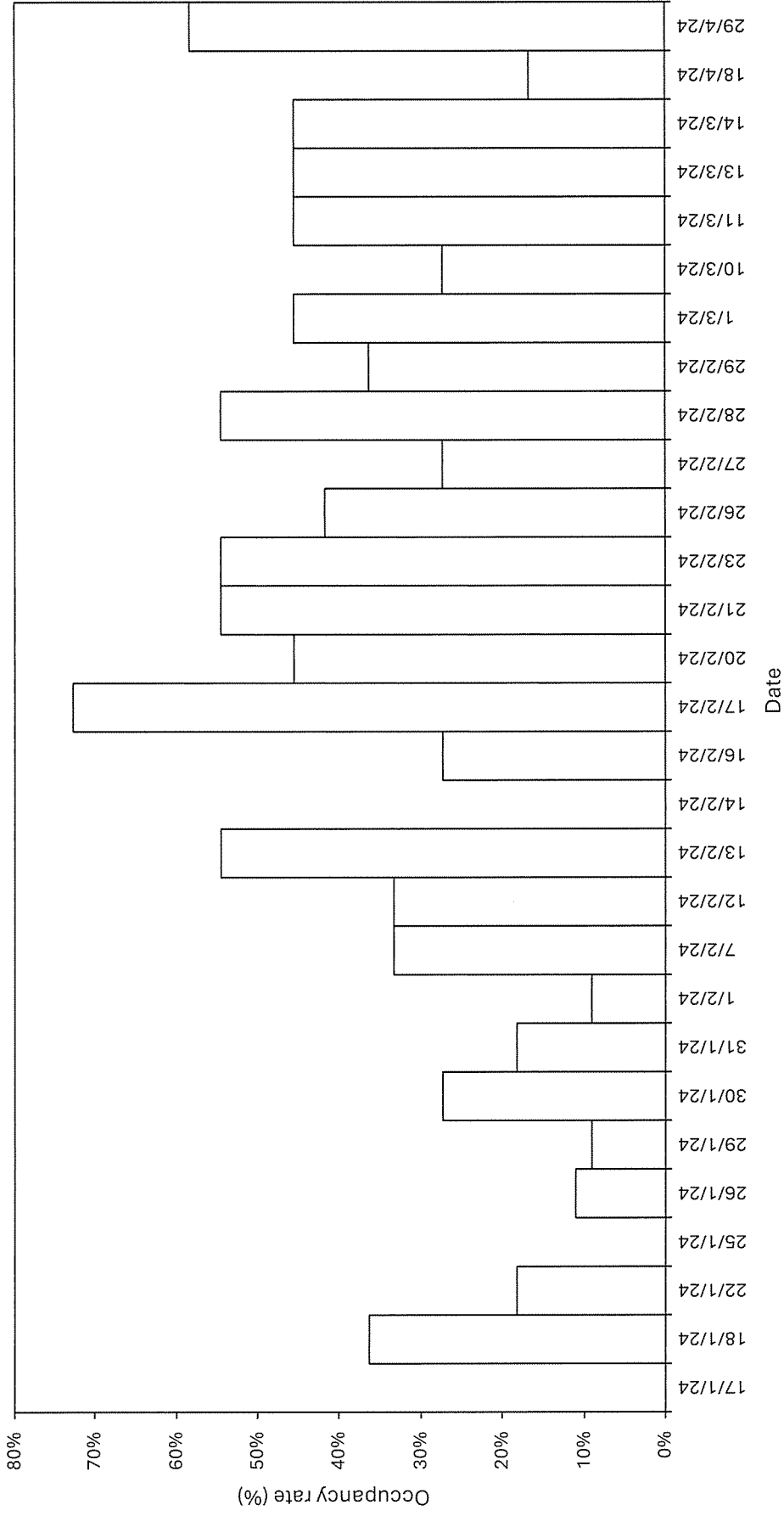


Figure 2: Beat occupancy rate for Mataura River between Ardlussa and Nokomai Gorge (January 2024-April 2024).

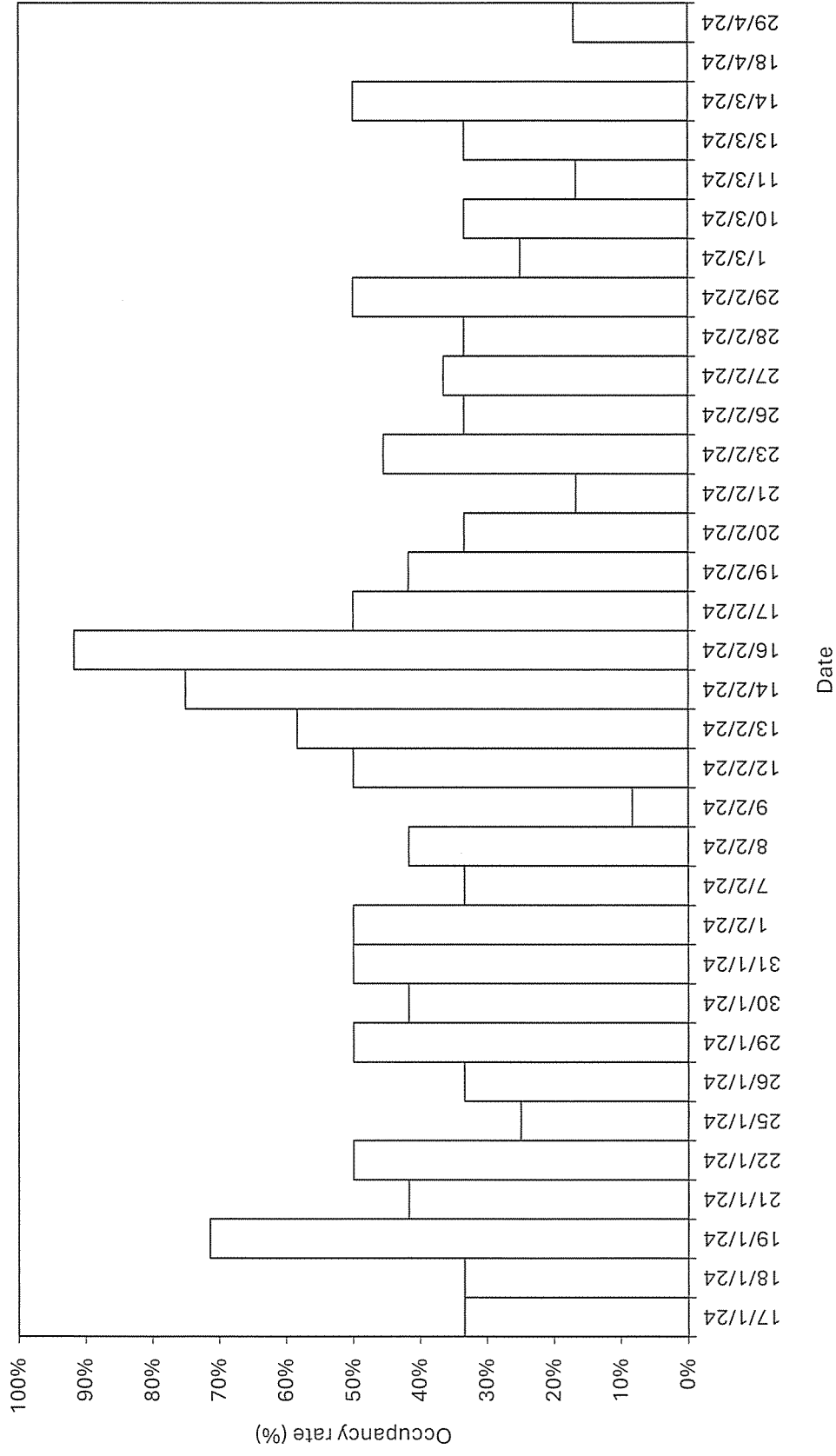


Figure 3: Beat occupancy rate for the Waikaia River (January 2024-April 2024).

Table 3: Occupancy rates for individual fishing beats on the Mataura River during January-March 2024.

Beat	Occupied	Not occupied	Occupancy rate (%)
Pig Creek	0	11	0%
Futtah	0	11	0%
Upper Fairlight	0	11	0%
Fairlight	1	10	9%
Fairlight	0	11	0%
Diggers Creek	4	6	40%
Above Brightwater	2	8	20%
Scott's	5	6	45%
Garston Bridge	4	8	33%
Garston	1	10	9%
Homestead	4	8	33%
Beehive	7	4	64%
Cattleyard	7	3	70%
Naylors	9	3	75%
Athol Bridge	11	1	92%
Flagstaff	6	6	50%
East Road	9	3	75%
Athol	1	10	9%
Upper Paddy's	3	9	25%
Lower Paddy's	5	7	42%
Eyre Creek	4	8	33%
Parawa Creek	4	9	31%
Parawa Downs	1	11	8%
Nokomai Cabins	9	5	64%
Len's	7	7	50%
Petrie's	7	7	50%
Hores	8	6	57%
Rocky	10	4	71%
Nokomai Camping	2	11	15%
Nokomai Gorge	7	6	54%

Lower Nokomai Gorge	2	10	17%
Upper Cattle Flat	9	19	32%
Cattle Flat Beat	7	13	35%
Cattle Flat Cabins	6	14	30%
Young's Beat	9	11	45%
Glenlapa Beat	1	2	33%
Boggy Creek Beat	4	16	20%
The Elbow Beat	9	11	45%
Sheepwash Creek	11	9	55%
Above Tommy	12	8	60%
Below Tommy	5	14	26%
Tower Creek Beat	5	14	26%
Ardlussa Bridge	9	11	45%

Table 4: Occupancy rates for individual fishing beats on the Waikaia River during January-March 2024.

Beat	Occupied	Not occupied	Occupancy rate (%)
Waipounamu Bridge Road	8	24	25%
Pyramid-Waiparu Rd 1	9	23	28%
Pyramid-Waiparu Rd 2	11	21	34%
Maher's Beach	12	20	38%
Dome Burn Access	9	23	28%
Waikaia Township	3	29	9%
Block Road	29	3	91%
Steeple Burn Access	8	22	27%
Block Road Bridge	19	11	63%
Argyle Burn Access	14	15	48%
Gow Burn Access	15	15	50%
Piano Flat Bridge	18	12	60%



Figure 4: A well-conditioned brown trout from the Brightwater Spring, captured during the Covid-19 boarder closure period in 2021. Fishing guide Graeme Watson noted it was the best condition brown trout he had even seen on the Brightwater. *Photo credit Graeme Watson.*

Conclusion

Through our monitoring efforts, we have observed very high angler compliance with fishing licence requirements on the Mataura and Waikaia rivers. We have also found that angling pressure peaks on these rivers during the months of January, February and March and most of the angling pressure during these months is from non-resident anglers. Furthermore, we've identified that certain beats experience exceptionally high levels of angler activity during these months, raising concerns about their potential impact on the fishery and overall fishing experience. Considering these findings, management mechanisms such as the Designated Waters Licence may be necessary to help manage and redistribute angler pressure to ensure resident anglers are not displaced from these fisheries.

Staff recommendations

Based on the monitoring conducted this season, staff suggest there are two primary options the Council may like to consider.

Classifying the following river reaches as Designated Waters;

- A. For the entire season, or

B. During the months of February and March

- 1.) The mid/upper Mataura River and all tributaries upstream of Keowns Bridge Road (the Ardlussa Bridge).
- 2.) The Waikaia River and all tributaries upstream of the Mataura River confluence.

If Council elects to have these rivers classified as Designated Waters for part of the fishing season (e.g., option B), staff advise against designating the mid/upper Mataura and Waikaia rivers in January. This suggestion stems from our apprehension around introducing additional regulatory complexity for resident anglers, especially families holidaying near these rivers during the Christmas and New Year period. In recent years, the Council has made great progress simplifying the second schedule regulations and it is the view of staff that the Council should avoid any actions that might reverse the progress that has been made.

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- Lovén Wallerius, M., Gräns, A., Koeck, B., Berger, D., Sandblom, E., Ekström, A., Arlinghaus, R. and Johnsson, J.I., 2019. Socially induced stress and behavioural inhibition in response to angling exposure in rainbow trout. *Fisheries Management and Ecology*, 26(6), pp.611-620.
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Election considerations

Council will be aware of the upcoming election. As discussed at the last meeting, there is opportunity for the Council to consider how they wish the council to be structured after the election.

Review recommendations

Council will recall the criticism of the numbers of governors in the governance review of our organisation, and recommendations from that review (in italics below).

“It is an extraordinary and unnecessary level of governance to have 144 governors (councillors of the regional FGCs and the NZFGC) for an organisation with a turnover of around \$11 million, approximately \$40 million in assets and 70 or so staff. It was pointed out by several parties that this means there are more Fish and Game councillors in New Zealand than there are Members of Parliament. The governor-to-staff ratio of 2:1 is not in line with best practice about governance ratios and effective teams.

With approximately 70 staff over 13 organisations there is about 5.3 staff available to service each council of 12.13 This disproportion is problematic. It leads to a blurring of roles between governance (councillors) and management or operations (staff). As volunteers, councillors are passionately invested in Fish and Game and often want to be more involved in management or operations than is appropriate for a governance role. Many councillors interact and communicate directly with staff rather than observing normal governance practice which requires a more formal demarcation whereby interaction and communications to staff are either conducted through the Chair, or by a formal delegation from the Council. This can lead to conflicting messaging from councils as to priorities or direction, and to too many demands on staff. It has also led in a number of cases to councillors trying to engage staff in their own conflicts with other councillors.

There are two ways to reduce the number of councillors. Firstly, by reducing the size of councils. Even leaving aside the question of the disproportion, twelve members on a council is too many for effective decision-making. A better number would be seven to eight. The second way to reduce the number of governors would be to reduce the number of FGCs”.

Prior to the last election, the Southland Council elected to reduce the number of governors to nine. With our Ngai Tahu representative, Southland is still a council with 10 members, which is significantly above the seven or eight recommended by the review.

To elect, coopt or appoint?

Another criticism of the review was the lack of diversity on Fish & Game councils. To address that the review recommended councils be comprised of both elected and appointed members. This would allow the considered appointment of members based on requisite skills and/or diversity.

The law does not currently allow councils to appoint members; however, councils are able to co-opt individuals.

The Southland Council has adopted the Organisational Strategy, after modification to enable appropriate regional implementation. The overall organisational strategy identifies that the organisation will ***“Implement a governance structure of both elected and appointed members”***.

To give effect to this the Southland Strategy, which has been adopted, identifies that; ***“The Southland Council will reduce the number of elected councilors for the 2024 election and look to subsequently coopt additional members based on requisite skills and representation”***.

At present, coopted governors are not able to vote. However, the council could decide to amend their standing orders to recognise that the chair will cast his or her vote or votes to reflect the majority view of the coopted members.

Benefits

While the Southland Council has generally had elections over the last few election cycles, that may not always remain the case. There is a risk in any democratic election that if insufficient candidates stand, every candidate gets elected, irrespective of the skills and experience they would bring to the boardroom table. The suggested reduction in the number of councilors seeking election means it is more likely that Southland will have a contested election and allow the council to strengthen the council, based on cooption of governors based on requisite skill.

Staff recommendation

The review recommends a council of seven or eight councilors. Staff suggest that our Ngai Tahu rep should be recognised as a councilor, therefore to allow the cooption of two additional governors, the council should consider reducing the number of elected governors to five.

Southland Fish & Game Staff report – February-March

1100 Species Management Projects

1113 Salmon spawning surveys

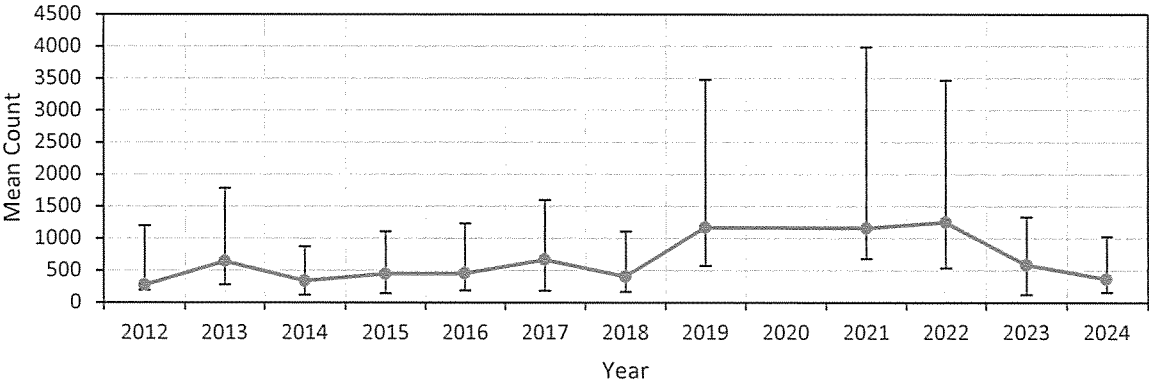
Staff completed the salmon spawning survey on the Irthing Stream. No salmon were seen this year and only two redds were observed.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2018	2020	2021	2024
Redds	34	5	22	49	39	16	1	4	16	2
Salmon							17	6	39	0

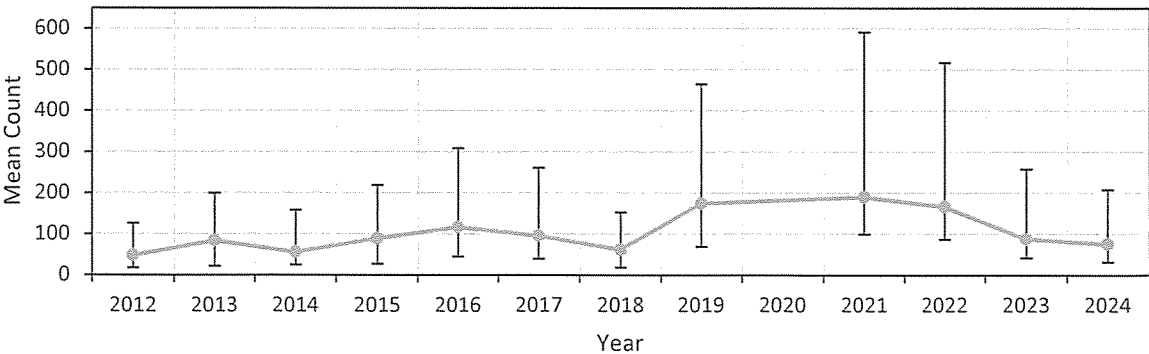
1114 Mallard Monitoring

The pre-season 2024 mallard monitoring counts were completed in early April. The counts were down relative to previous years with the average number of mallards counted on our monitored wetlands and river transects being some of the lowest on record. The lower mallard counts were anticipated and likely driven by the dry October brood rearing conditions resulting in reduced duckling survival.

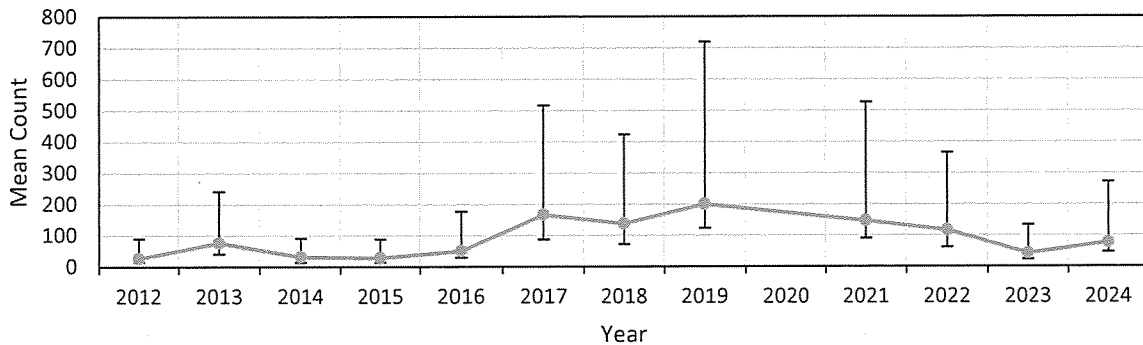
Average mallard count on river transects



Average mallard count on wetlands



Average mallard count land transects



1121 Game bird hunter telephone surveys

At the time of writing, staff were in the process of completing the opening weekend hunter harvest surveys. Initial indications are that the average harvest for active hunters was around 10 mallards for Opening Weekend. This is in the lower quartile of our harvests and aligns closely with our pre-season predictions based on soils moisture in the spring, which led to our Council recommending a conservative bag limit of 15 mallards per day, rather than 20.

This year, staff are also including questions related to satisfaction as part of a national hunter satisfaction survey. After inquiring about their harvest, we asked hunters four additional questions concerning their satisfaction with their opening weekend experience, the number of ducks in their hunting area, and the number of mallards harvested. We also asked hunters how many mallards they typically harvest on opening weekend to compare their 2024 harvest to previous years.

This survey has provided us with an excellent opportunity to gather valuable insights into how hunter satisfaction is affected by harvest (success) and the disparity between harvest expectations and reality. Furthermore, because the survey is a national survey, Fish & Game (collectively) will get insights into satisfaction, harvest, and expectation variation across a variety of geographies, duck populations, and bag limits. The insights obtained will be very useful for all F&G councils if they need to consider and recommend bag limit modifications in the future.

1161 Put and take fisheries

Sanford delivered their annual donation of chinook smolt in late-March (typically December). As usual we get much more than can be reared on for the Labour Weekend TAKF event, so a proportion are liberated directly to McGregor Pond, and approximately 500 placed in the hatchery rearing tank. It is anticipated that some of the latter will need to be released prior to October to give room for approximately 250 to be grown to pan-size.

1200 Habitat Protection/ Management

1211 RMA - Plan, policy, pSWALP

Proposed Southland Water and Land Plan

The Environment Court issued its ninth Interim Decision on the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan (pSWLP) on the 19 September 2023. The Decision dealt with outstanding matters before the Environment Court, including Rule 24. Rule 24 permits incidental discharges of contaminants (mainly nutrients, sediment, and microbial), subject to compliance with specified conditions. In response, the Environment Court expressed concern about whether Rule 24 was consistent with s 70 of the RMA. Section 70 requires permitted discharges to comply with a suite of conditions, including the avoidance of significant adverse effects on aquatic life.

High Court appeals on Rule 24 were heard in Christchurch in late October 2023. A reserved decision was issued by the High Court on 9 April 2024. In summary, the decision was largely consistent with joint legal submissions presented for Fish & Game and Forest & Bird, including that:

1. Section 70 applies to both point source and non-point source / diffuse discharges; and
2. Regional Councils cannot give effect to s 70 by simply including rules in their regional plan permitting discharges providing that the criteria in s 70 of the RMA are met. An inquiry as part of the planning process as to what the evidence says about the effects of the class of discharge being considered.

Significantly, the Environment Court had previously extended the opportunity to Environment Southland and other parties to provide evidence that its proposed Rule 24 would ensure that the suite of effects in s 70 did not occur. To date, no evidence has been provided by any party on this point. Instead, Environment Southland has recently applied for leave to argue the following legal points in the Court of Appeal:

1. The High Court applied the wrong legal test when:
 - a. concluding that replicating the criteria in s 70 of the RMA, and making them conditions of a permitted activity, would not meet the procedural requirements of s 70.
 - b. finding that there is a need for an inquiry as part of the planning process as to what the evidence says about the effects of the class of discharge being considered, in circumstances where those very effects are expressly precluded by the rule itself.
2. The High Court erred in its reasoning at paragraph [83] of the Decision that *“Council officers granting resource consents should not be tasked with the very enquiry that section 70 envisages will take place prior to the rule being included in the plan”*, on the basis that as a permitted activity rule it would not require a resource consent.

Fish & Game is currently considering its position in response to Environment Southland’s application.

Discussions have occurred between Fish & Game, Forest & Bird and Environment Southland in relation to High Court appeals on Rule 78, including the rule framework and criteria.

Plan Change Tuatahi

Fish & Game staff have remained in contact with Environment Southland staff regarding Plan Change Tuatahi. Plan Change Tuatahi is intended to set limits, targets and methods (for discharges to and abstractions from waterways) that will help achieve hauora, a state of healthy resilience, for waterbodies within a generation. Clarification is being sought on whether Environment Southland still intends to proceed with its original timetable to notify Plan Change Tuatahi in early 2024, notwithstanding Government proposals to grant a 3-year extension, until 31 December 2027, for regional councils to notify their freshwater plan changes.

Environment Southland – Gravel Management Working Group

Fish & Game staff have participated in three workshops as part of the Gravel Management Working Group convened by Environment Southland. Useful information and advice is being sought by Environment Southland to inform gravel management, including gravel extraction for commercial aggregate and infrastructure, in Southland.

Environment Southland – ‘Slow the Flow Murihiku Project’

Fish & Game staff have participated in a workshop as part of the ‘Slow the Flow Murihiku Project’ convened by Environment Southland. The project, which is due to conclude in mid-2025, seeks to investigate nature-based solutions for management of peak flows in Southland Rivers. Funding has been provided by Ministry for Environment.

Environment Southland – current planning processes

A written submission has been filed on Environment Southland’s Proposed 2024 – 2034 Long-term Plan, Regional Climate Change Strategy for Murihiku / Southland (Phase One), and Infrastructure Strategy for Healthy Rivers and Resilient Communities 2024 – 2054.

Fish & Game’s main concern is that the Long-term Plan is focused on short term spending on engineered river and flood management, i.e. continuation of the existing ‘command and control’ ethos, which is proving environmentally and economically unsustainable. This approach does not accord with advice to Environment Southland about the need for strategic change in the direction of river management over time toward a ‘living with the river’ ethos, particularly given climate change predictions for Southland.

Gravel & river management

The manager met with the chair of Environment Southland, the chief executive of Environment Southland, the chair of the Maitai Liaison Committee, the Chair of Federated Farmers, the DOC area manager, iwi and several concerned landowners on Glenaroy Station (Waikaia) to discuss an erodible bend of the river. After the meeting and providing further feedback, the owner of Glenaroy met to discuss further options, including simply leaving the river alone as potentially the most cost effective action.

As Council may have observed, gravel and river management seems to have become increasingly contentious over the last few years. Interestingly, Environment Southland have recently undertaken a

review of gravel reserves in the between Mataura between Cattle Flat and Riversdale and found that actually, there has not been a significant change over the last decade.

1212 RMA - Consents evaluation

Instream works	Discharges	Gravel / Rock
<p>Catchment Management Division (Environment Southland) – Application for consent for river works in the Oreti River at Mossburn to address lateral erosion posing a threat to adjacent roading infrastructure.</p> <p>Brunel Peaks Station – Application for renewal of consent to undertake river works in the beds of tributaries of the lower Waiau River to maintain stock crossings and address erosion.</p> <p>Waikaia Gold – Liaison with representatives of mining company about prospective gold mining operation at Waikaka, including potential stream relocation to facilitate a moving pit.</p>	<p>Gore District Council – Liaison with Gore District Council about its application to discharge treated wastewater from Gore and Mataura townships into the lower Mataura River</p>	<p>Riverton Rural Transport – Application for consent to extract gravel from the mid-Aparaima River.</p> <p>McGregor Concrete – Application for consent to extract gravel from the mid-Oreti River near Fernhill.</p>

1232 Pond/wetland identification and advice

Staff oversaw construction of a 6ha wetland at Waituna. This is the final (proposed) wetland to be built at the Mahinga Kai Pa.



Staff surveyed one potential wetland site in the Orauea catchment and contributed advice on another near Invercargill.

2024 GBHT applications close end of June, so staff will be approaching landowners to get local applications together.

1241 Waiau River hydro power effects (periphyton, WWP)

As of May 10, staff had completed nine Waiau – Mararoa periphyton surveys. The May 10 survey indicated a 'Red' status for the Waiau, after having returned 'Green' status by the survey on April 24. This followed elevated MLC discharges resulting from a high turbid Mararoa River and lake spill from Manapouri. Following a flushing flow planned to be released from MLC on May 15, a follow up survey is planned for May 17.

1300 Participation

1311 Maintain, protect and enhance access.

Staff have been working with a landowner that adjoins the middle reaches of the Mataura River. The landowner has tentatively agreed to allow access next season. This will be a new angler access point.

Staff have also provided some fencing materials to a landowner on the upper Mataura who provides several angler access points through his property. The use of this fencing will better enable anglers to cross a particular corner of the property and help secure ongoing access into the future.

Following positive feedback regarding the upper Mataura beat system, staff have begun developing a beat system for the Waikaia River.

Staff have continued working constructively with the Gordon family, who own the Brightwater Spring, and the QEII Trust representative, to develop a covenant that provides for the stream's values, as well as securing public access. This is progressing well, and hopefully details will be confirmed prior to our next council meeting.

1313 Monowai jetty proposal

Progress on the Monowai Jetty has continued. Materials have been collected and the timber is in storage. Contractors have been arranged and funding applications are on-going.

1314 Pressure sensitive fisheries

Now that the fishing season has finished, staff have begun analysing the data from the 2023/24 pressure-sensitive fisheries monitoring programme.

Mataura and Waikaia

Staff have written a report outlining the results of angler monitoring on the mid/upper Mataura and Waikaia rivers (see appended report). Key results from this work are as follows:

- Compliance with licencing requirements was notably high (99%). Over the season, a total of eight FWL offences were detected, and non-resident anglers were responsible for seven of those offences.
- Angling pressure varied by month, and was highest in January, February, and March. During these months, 61-73% of angling pressure was attributed to non-resident anglers.
- Beat occupancy rates during January-March ranged from 0% to 90% and were affected by weather and river conditions.
- Some particularly popular fishing beats experienced almost daily angling activity raising concerns regarding the potential impact on fish behaviour, catchability, and therefore angler satisfaction.

Oreti

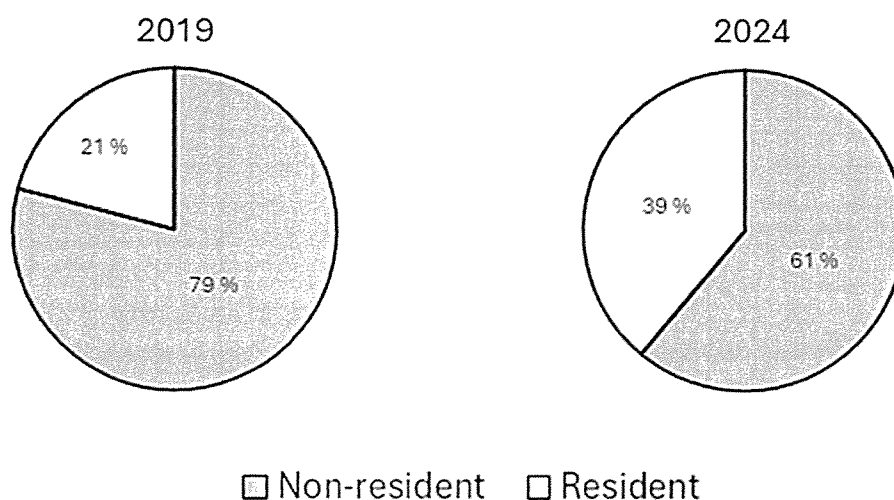
The table below outline the beat occupancy rates from the upper Oreti.

Overall beat occupancy rate for the upper Oreti River

Month	Overall occupancy rate 2018/19 season	Overall occupancy rate 2020/21 season	Overall occupancy rate 2023/24 season
October	29%	26%	40%
November	31%	23%	35%
December	54%	30%	36%
January	35%	31%	42%
February	52%	34%	51%

March	31%	27%	42%
April	20%	24%	27%
Whole season	36%	28%	39%

Resident non-resident use of the upper Oreti during January-April 2024 was 39% resident, 61% non-resident. For comparison, in the period January-April 2019, 79% of anglers were non-resident and 21% were resident.



Non-resident Designated Water day licence sales 2023/24

Number of Southland non-resident DW day licences purchased	Number of non-resident anglers
1	204 (60%)
2	78 (23%)
3	31 (9%)
4	12 (4%)
5	16 (5%)

1331 Promote Fish/Hunt via general media

In the leadup to the opening weekend, staff were interviewed by radio station MoreFM. The interview focused on season prospects as well as tips for hunting and cooking mallards.

1332 Promote fish/hunt magazine, internet & print

Staff have produced content for the e-zines Reel Life and Both Barrels. Staff also produced editorials in the leadup to opening weekend and provided comments for post-opening weekend news articles.

1334 R3 - recruitment, retention, reactivation


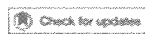
Wellbeing study

The results from our qualitative (interview-based) wellbeing study has now been published in *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*. This research offers evidence of trout fishing's potential to impact the wellbeing of participants. This work will complement the current quantitative wellbeing research that is currently underway.

KOTUITUI: NEW ZEALAND JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES ONLINE
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2024.2347409>

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group

RESEARCH ARTICLE

 OPEN ACCESS 

Exploring the relationship between trout fishing and wellbeing: insights from Aotearoa New Zealand trout anglers

Cohen Stewart^a, Iritana Bennett-Fakahau^b, Shyamala Nada-Raja^c and Kayla Stewart^d

^aSouthland Fish & Game Council, Invercargill, New Zealand; ^bOtago Medical School, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand; ^cVa'a o Tautai – Centre for Pacific Health, Division of Health Sciences, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand; ^dIndependent Scholar, Waitati, Dunedin

ABSTRACT

Internationally, there is growing interest in understanding the potential for recreational fishing to enhance the wellbeing of participants. To date, no studies have investigated the potential for recreational trout fishing to influence wellbeing in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. To address this gap, nine semi-structured interviews were conducted with anglers in the local community and explored their understanding of wellbeing and how they perceive trout fishing contributes to their wellbeing. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, analysed thematically, and examined using the Te Whare Tapa Whā model of holistic wellbeing. For trout anglers, wellbeing incorporated mental, physical, spiritual, and relational health. Trout fishing was perceived as enhancing these elements of wellbeing by fostering positive states of being; cultivating connection with self, others, place and nature; allowing for disconnection from stressors; and providing physical exercise. These exploratory findings highlight the potential for trout fishing to enhance all dimensions of holistic wellbeing within the Te Whare Tapa Whā model and a need for further research in this area.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 6 November 2023
Accepted 18 April 2024

KEYWORDS

Fishing; wellbeing; mental health; trout; green space; blue space

Introduction

Over recent decades, a troubling trend of declining mental wellbeing has emerged in Aotearoa New Zealand (New Zealand Health Survey Database 2011; Fleming et al. 2022; Stats 2022). While ongoing research seeks to understand the causes of this decline, evidence suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the situation (Every-Palmer et al. 2020; Gasteiger et al. 2021). This deterioration of mental wellbeing has compounded financial pressures on an already burdened healthcare system (Ministry of Health 2017) underscoring the need for innovative and cost-effective solutions to improve, maintain and enhance the wellbeing of New Zealanders.

Internationally, there is a growing recognition of the positive effects that nature exposure can have on individuals' health and wellbeing (Shanahan et al. 2019; Lewis

1400 Communication

1426 Communication with anglers and hunters

Staff have received and replied to various email, Facebook and phone queries from anglers and hunters. Staff have also assisted with claim tag disputes. The annual Fiordland Clay Target Club duck hunter shoot was attended (and entered). We donated a box of decoys and a junior game bird hunting licence as prizes, as we have done in the past. Staff gave a talk at NZDA's Invercargill meeting on duck hunting, giving a calling demonstration and subsequently judging a calling competition.

1427 Communication with other F&G regions

Staff have liaised with both Otago staff and NZFG in relation to suspected poisoning of waterfowl by pasture-applied grass grub spray. In addition to the well-publicised Lake Wanaka incident, there have been two incidents in the Te Anau area. Diazinon is the organophosphate suspected to be the toxin responsible. Otago and Southland Regions issued a joint media statement criticizing MPI for their refusal to fund testing that would confirm Diazinon. We are now intending to fund the testing ourselves.

Southland staff also worked with other regional and national F&G staff regarding opening weekend compliance.

1428 Fish & Game website maintenance

Additional content has been added to the Southland Game page within the Fish & Game website.

1452 Schools/youth organisations

Staff judged duck calling competitions at Makarewa and Lochiel primary schools. Staff have also worked with social workers from Awarua Whanau Services to establish a trout fishing programme for the youth they work with.

1500 Compliance and enforcement

1513 Game Season Ranging

Staff and Police undertook game bird hunter compliance checks on opening weekend, focusing on the following areas: Invercargill, Winton, Drummond, Otautau, Tuatapere, Riverton, Waimatuku, Forest Hill, Gore, Chatton, Wendon Valley and Waikaka.

- 150 hunters were checked and spoken with (+ their non-hunting associates).
- 50 wetland/river sites were visited.
- 1 hunter was found without a Gamebird Licence
- 1 hunter was found using 12ga lead shot

Overall, staff were very pleased with the high level of compliance and hunter conduct.

1533 Fiordland compliance & CCD

Staff have completed the didymo presence/absence sampling in Fiordland rivers as part of the CCD contract with DOC and completed the final season's report for MPI.

1842 National Liaison

Staff assisted the chair in responding to a detailed request from the Minister who wrote asking for a range of information *“To help me get a full picture of how each of the Fish and Game Councils are operating and enable me to deliver on my commitments for Hunting and Fishing, I have written separately to each council to ask for information to support my understanding of operational and performance matters”*. The chair’s response is listed in correspondence.

1900 Administration

1916 Staff training and health & safety

Southland Fish & Game and Te Ao Marama staff completed an Outdoor First Aid (1 day) Course through Peak Safety. Having staff first aid training aligned will simplify the process by having a quorum to run the course with the whole team in the future.



Date: 11 March 2024

To: New Zealand Professional Fishing Guides Association
PO Box 41
Fairlie 7949

Attention: Craig SMITH - President

Copy by email to: hatchfishing@me.com

nzpfga@gmail.com

Dear Craig

Casey CRAVENS - Guiding unlicensed fishing clients.

I am writing to formally raise a complaint regarding Casey CRAVENS (Casey), a current member of the New Zealand Professional Fishing Guides Association (NZPFGA), guiding clients who were fishing without the necessary license in the Southland Fish & Game Region.

Background

On two separate occasions, Casey has been found guiding clients who were fishing without the necessary license in the Southland Fish & Game Region. Specifically:

1. On 23 October 2018, a Fish & Game Ranger found Casey guiding a non-resident client, Edward WOJCIK (Edward), at South Mavora Lake. Edward did not possess a current fishing license. Casey admitted to the Ranger that he had not checked Edward's license prior to commencing fishing, stating, *"It does say all over my website that you need to have a licence."*

Following the incident, Fish & Game pursued a charge of fishing without a license against Edward. In the meantime, Edward returned to the United States and declined to communicate with Fish & Game regarding the matter. The case went to a formal proof hearing in the Invercargill District Court, resulting in Edward's conviction and sentencing under s 26ZI(1)(a) of the Conservation Act for fishing without a licence.

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

Southland Region

PO Box 159, Invercargill 9840, New Zealand. Telephone (03) 215 9117 Email southland@fishandgame.org.nz



2. On 14 February 2024, a Fish & Game Ranger found Casey guiding two non-resident clients, Donald WHITTEMORE and Harrison WHITTEMORE, on the Waikaia River. Donald and Harrison did not possess current fishing licenses.

Following the incident, Fish & Game spent substantial staff time investigating it, including liaising with both Harrison and Donald, and Casey. This investigation found reliable and admissible evidence, which met the evidential test to prosecute Donald and Harrison for fishing without a licence on 14 February 2024; and to prosecute Casey for aiding and abetting fishing without a licence on the same day. This resulted in Fish & Game:

- a. Issuing Harrison and Donald with a formal warning for fishing without a licence, which reflected their degree of cooperation and misunderstanding in the matter; and
- b. Issuing Casey with a formal warning for aiding and abetting fishing without a licence. This formal warning is recorded in Fish & Game's national compliance database. A copy of the formal warning letter, dated 6 March 2024, sent to Casey by e-mail and post is provided for your information.

Donald and Harrison also both admitted to Fish & Game during the investigation that they fished with Casey as a professional guide on the Maitara River on 13 February 2024, without the required fishing licenses.

Matters of complaint

Fish & Game wishes to raise the following matters of complaint:

1. Casey has failed on two separate occasions to check whether non-resident clients held current fishing licences before commencing guiding, i.e., positively assisting the act of fishing.

On both occasions, Casey acknowledged not checking that his clients held the required licence(s) before guiding them. Fish & Game consider that:

- a. This was a material oversight and places Casey in a significantly compromised position as a professional fishing guide; and
- b. A reasonable and prudent professional fishing guide would check that their client(s) possess the required fishing licence(s) before commencing any fishing activity with them.



I appreciate that you will be mindful of the need to ensure that guides who are members of your organisation behave appropriately in their professional endeavors. Accordingly, I presume some action will be taken by your organisation against Mr Cravens that reflects the significance of his actions.

I understand that investigating and responding to this complaint will require some time. Please feel free to contact me directly if you wish to discuss the matter or require any documentation relied upon by Fish & Game to support this complaint.

I wish you well in your upcoming off-season.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zane Moss".

Zane Moss
Manager
Fish & Game – Southland Region

Enc: Warning letter addressed to Casey CRAVENS – dated 6 March 2024.



Date: 6 March 2024

To: Casey Cravens
95 London Street
Dunedin Central
Dunedin 9016

Copy by email to: caseycravens@gmail.com

Dear Casey

Guiding unlicensed fishing clients – 14 February 2024

On 14 February 2024, a Warranted Fish and Game Ranger, Blake HARPUR, found you guiding two non-resident anglers, Harrison WHITTEMORE ('Harrison') and Donald WHITTEMORE ('Donald'), on the Waikaia River near Waikaia. Specifically:

1. The Ranger saw you and Harrison standing in the Waikaia River. You were actively assisting Harrison with the act of fly fishing, while Donald watched from the bank.
2. The Ranger spoke to Donald, informing him that he was checking fishing licenses. Donald said that the group had caught one small fish earlier and you possessed the licences.
3. You informed the Ranger that:
 - a. You had overlooked checking if Donald and Harrison had fishing licences;
 - b. Donald had also been fishing; and
 - c. You guided Donald and Harrison on 13 and 14 February 2024.
4. Donald informed the Ranger that he had sought confirmation from you prior to fishing that you were providing all fishing equipment, including licences.
5. The Ranger gave Donald and Harrison Offence Notices for fishing without a licence. The Ranger also seized the Thomas fly rod and reel, which Harrison was using and belongs to you.

Donald subsequently provided Fish and Game with copies of a WhatsApp message sent to you on 11 February 2024 and a follow-up email sent to you on 12 February 2024. In these messages, he asked if you were providing all fishing equipment, including licenses, as part of the guiding services. You contest receipt of Donald's WhatsApp message. In any event, you

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received Donald's e-mail, responding seeking clarification of what size waders / wading boots were required and advised that you were likely to fish the Mataura or Waikaia Rivers with them tomorrow (13 February 2024). Your email response to Donald on 12 February 2024, did not address the provision of fishing licences.

Neither Donald nor Harrison subsequently checked if you had purchased fishing licenses for them before they started fishing using your services as a guide on the Mataura and Waikaia Rivers. Similarly, you did not check if Harrison or Donald held valid licenses before assisting them as a guide with fishing. In explanation for this omission, you say that:

1. Your guiding website and an e-mail, including attached documentation, sent to Donald on 7 January 2024 clearly state that clients are responsible for purchasing their own fishing licences; and
2. If Donald was concerned about licensing, he could have checked the 'What to Bring' page on your website, and you question why he didn't raise the matter with you by phone or in person.

As you are aware, Donald and Harrison were required to each hold a standard non-resident licence to fish the Mataura and Waikaia Rivers. This omission has resulted in Fish and Game spending significant time investigating the matter and issuing Donald and Harrison with formal written warnings for fishing without a licence on the Waikaia River on 14 February 2024. Donald and Harrison also both admitted to Fish and Game that they fished with you as a professional guide on the Mataura River on 13 February 2024, without the required licenses.

Fish and Game considers there is credible and admissible evidence that meets the evidential test to prosecute you for aiding and abetting the offence of fishing without a licence on 14 February 2024 for the following reasons:

1. Fishing is defined in the Conservation Act as meaning the catching, taking, or harvesting of sports fish and includes:
 - a. Any other activity that may reasonably be expected to result in the taking or harvesting of sports fish;
 - b. Any attempt to catch, take, or harvest sports fish; and
 - c. Any operation in support of or in preparation for any activity described in this definition.

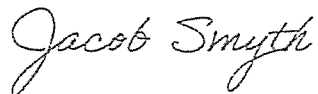
You were hired by Harrison and Donald to support them in their fishing expedition. The fishing activity was undertaken by Harrison and Donald without holding the licence(s) required by the Conservation Act.

2. You failed to ascertain whether Harrison and Donald held current non-resident fishing licences before commencing guiding, i.e., positively assisting the act of fishing. This was reckless, particularly because Donald had sought specific confirmation from you by e-mail on 12 February 2024 that you were providing fishing licences as part of the guiding package – this e-mail was seen and replied to by you.

courier / freight company, to uplift from the Fish and Game office located at 17 Eye Street, West Invercargill, Invercargill 9810 – open hours: 8:30am – 5:00pm Monday – Friday. Given the high value that you have ascribed to the seized fishing equipment (\$2,375NZ) and possibility of damage in transit, Fish and Game will not arrange couriering it to you.

Fish and Game will be contacting the Professional Guides Association about this matter, outlining its expectations for professional fishing guides to ensure their clients have the necessary license(s) before fishing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacob Smyth".

Jacob Smyth
Fish and Game Officer
Fish and Game – Southland Region

3. This is the second time that a Fish and Game Ranger has found you guiding a client that did not hold a current fishing licence in the Southland Fish and Game region.

On 23 October 2018, you were found guiding a non-resident client, Edward WOJCIK ('Edward'), at South Mavora Lake who did not hold a current fishing licence authorizing him to do so. You acknowledged to the Ranger that you had not checked whether Edward had a licence and said: *"it does say all over my website that you need to have a licence"*.

Fish and Game was required to pursue a fishing without a licence charge against Edward to a formal proof hearing in the Invercargill District Court, which resulted in a conviction under the Conservation Act.

4. In both instances where your clients were found fishing without a licence, you have acknowledged not checking that they held the required licence(s) before guiding them. Fish and Game consider that:
 - a. This was a material oversight and places you in a significantly compromised position as a professional fishing guide; and
 - b. A reasonable and prudent professional fishing guide would check that their client(s) possess the required fishing licence(s) before commencing any fishing activity with them.

To clarify, Fish and Game consider that professional fishing guides must do more than just simply advise clients via a website or email that they require a fishing license. Professional fishing guides should actively check that their client(s) have the required fishing licence(s) before starting fishing to avoid incidents such as this.

Fish and Game has considered this matter with reference to:

1. The Solicitor General's Prosecution Guidelines – dated 1 July 2013; and
2. The Solicitor General's Guidelines for the Use of Warnings – dated 23 December 2021.

In response, Fish and Game has decided to exercise leniency and issue you with a formal warning for aiding and abetting fishing without a licence on 14 February 2024. Fish and Game's decision to issue you a formal warning for the offence is made on the basis that:

1. A record of the fact that you have been provided with a formal warning for aiding and abetting fishing without a licence will be retained in its national compliance database.

A formal warning for aiding and abetting fishing without a licence is a relevant consideration if you engage in any similar incident(s) in the future.
2. If you offend under the Conservation and / or Wildlife Acts and associated regulations in the future such leniency will not be offered to you again by Fish and Game.

Fish and Game understands that the fly rod and reel seized from Harrison belongs to you. This fishing equipment is now available for you, or someone nominated on your behalf, including a

Steve McCartney

From: Cohen Stewart
Sent: Tuesday, 21 May 2024 10:12 AM
To: Steve McCartney
Subject: RE: Proposed changes to trout fishing rules in Designated Waters in Southland.

Hi Steve,

Please include this email as inwards correspondence.

Thanks,
Cohen

From: Kevin & Jenny <kevjenn@bigpond.com>
Sent: Friday, May 17, 2024 6:42 PM
To: southland@fishandgame.org.nz
Subject: FW: Proposed changes to trout fishing rules in Designated Waters in Southland.

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To: the Manager, Southland Fish and Game.

As a senior Australian fly fisher who has visited Southland at least 15 times over the last 20 years, I am extremely concerned that the new Designated Waters restrictions proposed by Southland Fish and Game will make my NZ fishing trips not worthwhile. The restrictions will greatly reduce my fishing time on Southland rivers and greatly reduce the not insignificant amount of money that I put into the NZ economy when I visit.

I'd like to list the advantages to the NZ economy that I bring to NZ-- and I am just one of the thousands of fly fishers from all over the world who flock to NZ for the unbelievable trout fishing now on offer.

- + Flights to and from NZ with Air New Zealand.
- + Car hire and fuel costs.
- + Accommodation expenses.
- + Food and drinks expenses.
- + Hiring of guides, many of whom are NZ nationals.
- + Purchase of trout fishing licence.
- + Purchase of fishing equipment such as flies, lines, rods, waders.

All the above items place money into the various providers of those needs and, through taxes, money into the NZ government's finances.

From my reading of the Southland Fish and Game's website that attempts to explain why the proposed new restrictions are necessary, I have found that fishing in the Maitai and Waikaiti rivers and their tributaries has improved over the years and even in areas of high fishing pressure the results at the end of each day have shown that good sized fish are still actively feeding. I have never found that those rivers have been 'overfished'. I have rarely seen other fishers on those rivers. Those that I have seen are generally overseas fishers like me. I cannot remember a time when I have seen a local NZ fisher on those rivers. I, like most other fly fishers, follow the "catch and release" principle so that any fish caught is just weighed, photographed then carefully placed back into the water. We value and respect the opportunity to fish the pristine rivers of Southland.

I believe that that proposed restrictive variations to fishing Southland rivers has been influenced by a small number of NZ nationals who object to overseas visitors such as myself from fishing in Southland rivers. The proposed manner of organising fishing is clearly biased towards local fishers. Even the designation of the Oreti River from Mossburn to near Mavora Lakes places a huge length of river under the "Designated Waters" principle. I request that you carefully consider the retrograde implications of your organisations proposals and how they will affect the NZ economy, fishing tourism and the now excellent fly fishing in Southland.

Thank you and regards,
Kevin W Gowen



19th April 2024

Hon. Todd McClay
Minister of Hunting and Fishing

By email: t.mcclay@ministers.govt.nz

Dear Minister McClay

Thank you for your request for information regarding the operations of the Southland Fish & Game Council.

The Southland region operates similarly to the other Fish & Game regions. Some of our primary differences are the popularity of waterfowl hunting amongst the Southland community, with the highest proportion of the population participating, and the popularity of trout fishing, particularly with Non-Resident anglers.

Southland typically receives twice as much Non-Resident angling pressure as the next most popular region. While at face value that may seem a blessing, because of differing expectations regarding angler density (crowding), it is increasingly resulting in displacement of resident anglers from our most popular fisheries and necessitating increasing management intervention.

Notes and limitations to this summary response

Unless otherwise stated, the figures in this summary have been derived from audited annual reports which have been submitted to the Minister of Conservation under s26X of the Conservation Act and s44a of the Public Finance Act 1989. Further detail on the Southland Council’s operational activities and performance can be found in those annual reports.

Questions 1 & 2

Because our organisation is so small, there is significant cross-over in roles, particularly for the Administrator, as he responds to angler and hunter enquiries through our website, emails, telephone and directly in our office. He also manages other sectors of delivery, such as gamebird disturbance issues that farmers experience, and management of Controlled Fishery access.

COMPOSITION OF STAFF

	TOTAL FTE's	FIELD OFFICERS	MGERS	ADMIN	RMA	PAID OVER \$100,000	TOTAL COST
2017/18	6.5 (+ contractor (0.5))	3	1	1.5	1	1	495966
2018/19	6.5(+ contractor (0.5))	3	1	1.5	1	1	523554
2019/20	6.5(+ contractor (0.5))	3	1	1.5	1	1	537951
2020/21	6.5(+ contractor (0.5))	3	1	1.5	1	1	551134
2021/22	6.125(+ contractor (0.5))	3	1	1.125	1	1	551290
2022/23	7	2 (2 partial)*	1	1	1	1	550190
2023/24**	7(+ contractor (0.5))	4	1	1	1	2	738350***



* Due to a resignation post maternity leave a position was replaced part way through the financial year and a new position established for engagement with biosecurity and non-resident anglers.

**Note: Incomplete year but staffing levels correct at April 2024. Second position paid over 100k is a Senior Fish & Game Officer.

***Salary total for 23/24 is *budgeted* total. Increase was related to an independent review of salary bands by Strategic Pay who concluded that nearly all staff were sitting below the market average for both government and private sector equivalent roles, as well as promotion into a senior role of one staff member and increasing experience of two new Fish & Game Officers. As part of the Council's good employer obligations, salaries were adjusted upwards towards midpoints for the roles.

Question 3

Unfortunately, the four main rivers that cross the Southland Plains have been found to be significantly degraded which has necessitated Fish & Game's involvement in processes to advocate for improvement. Much of this has been through the various stages of development of Environment Southland's Water and Land Plan. The Plan was first notified in 2016 and proceeded through various stages of litigation. At the time of writing, a High Court decision which favoured F&G's position, is still within the appeal period. Estimating costs for the remainder of the process is therefore not possible, as the council cannot consider the implications of any such appeals, nor the costs associated with joining.

Engagement in RMA cases has largely been funded from the regional legal pool fund which is held by New Zealand F&G Council. Where additional costs have been met from regional reserves they are identified below.

Legal proceedings and cases

Case	Court	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Forecast 2024
Southland Water & Land Plan	Environment Court	NZC	NZC	827	12965	91314	57200	
Waituna Lagoon Consent	High Court Judicial Review						NZC	
Southland Water & Land Plan	High Court							14799* <i>Uncertain</i>
Southland Water & Land Plan	Environment Court							<i>Uncertain</i>
Staff Hours		887	678	674	943	1064	560	600

Question 4

There have been **no** employment disputes, complaints, awards or dismissals in the period 2017 to date. One administrative staff member was made redundant in a restructuring aimed at increasing efficacy in delivery to anglers and hunters.

Question 5

Reserves are split between restricted funds (given by an outside agency with restrictions on use) or dedicated (for the replacement of assets or from the non-resident licence levies).

CASH RESERVES (\$)

	Restricted	Dedicated	General (cash at hand)	Total
2017/18	99522	654749	147325	901596
2018/19	174043	628021	64875	866939
2019/20	184323	652197	23665	860185
2020/21	199388	658826	203495	1061709
2021/22	233706	644332	219109	1097147
2022/23	286775	623630	172084	1082489

Book values are provided for Non-Current Assets below. Again, these are from our audited annual reports.

NON-CURRENT ASSETS

	Land	Buildings	Plant & Field Equipment	Vehicles	Office Equipment
2017/18	133065	304333	21991	114753	29556
2018/19	133065	295203	19241	138373	26730
2019/20	133065	286347	19548	140835	24348
2020/21	133065	277757	39246	98708	24171
2021/22	133065	269424	26547	69196	17192
2022/23	133065	261341	20326	103357	16941

FORECAST AND ACTUAL EXPENSES & INCOME

	Budgeted expenses	Actual Expenses	Budgeted Income	Actual Income
2017/18	934,943	934,943	1,410,970	1,708,618
2018/19	800,009	804,797	1,471,616	1,558,871
2019/20	933,309	988,230	1,529,699	1,600,278
2020/21	878,784	882,200	1,497,085	1,559,215
2021/22	715,357	841,994	1,144,238	1,485,698
2022/23	901,699	959,664	1,423,080	1,567,202

BREAKDOWN OF INCOME

	Fish licence sales	Game licence sales	Non Resident Levy	Donations	Interest	Other	Total
2017/18	993,568	393,305	31,249	6,755	20,311	113,683	1,558,871
2018/19	974,587	392,733	57,808	8,550	24,765	141,835	1,600,278
2019/20	932,620	377,777	54,065	55,378	19,937	119,438	1,559,215
2020/21	900,673	394,764	4,092	8,100	12,047	166,022	1,485,698
2021/22	948,291	393,937	6,583	38	12,710	205,643	1,567,202
2022/23	1,052,944	410,937	76,388	2,000	39,420	154,942	1,736,631

'Other' includes Southland Water and land Plan appeal funding (55k in 2020/21 and \$73,361 in 2022/23) plus a gain on sale of \$73,464 in 2021/22, rent received, Court fines and Diversion payments to the Council.

'Donations' include COVID wage subsidy \$46,378 in 2019/20.

Question 6

Monitoring techniques

The Southland Council undertakes extensive monitoring activities for both sports fish and game birds. I'm unsure of the level of information required, but further detail is provided in our Annual Reports.

For game birds, techniques include transect brood counts, soil moisture modelling, molt counts, summer counts, aerial transect counts, aerial peak counts and drone surveys, depending on the species.

For sports fish techniques include redd counts, electrofishing surveys, fyke netting, hand netting, sonar surveys, creel surveys and drift-diving.

Determination of hours undertaken in support of game birds and sports fish.

As in other Regions, Southland Fish and Game work is divided into 8 output areas.

A summary of the expenditure and hours for the output area is presented below. To assist with analysis, the following descriptions and details of the type of activity undertaken is as follows:

- **Species management:** Waterfowl trend counts, trout and salmon spawning surveys, lakes sonar sports fish population surveys, creel surveys, native species interaction research and support, gamebird harvest surveys of hunters, trout liberations, setting regulations, management of nuisance gamebirds.
-
- **Habitat protection:** Assisting farmers with wetland surveying, construction and development, and issuing grants, native plants and advice. Screening RMA consents and submitting on regional planning documents, working with other statutory authorities to protect critical habitat.
- **Angler and hunter participation:** Identifying access points to waterways and wetlands and signposting same, measuring angler and hunter satisfaction via surveys, assisting with training events for rural communities to support mental health, liaising with angling and hunting clubs, generation and distribution of printed and online content to licence holders.
- **Public Interface:** Engagement with iwi, responding to public enquiries, raising public awareness of angling and hunting through the media, social media, newsletters, magazines and our website. Advocacy for the species and the habitat they rely upon for survival and supporting public promotion of events such as World Wetlands Day.
- **Compliance:** Delivering Check, Clean and Dry advocacy for Fiordland on behalf of other agencies such as MPI, Environment Southland & DOC. Compliance and law enforcement activities in the field, coordination, and training of honorary rangers, undertaking prosecution action against offenders to deter non-compliance with regulations. Supporting Department of Conservation staff with whitebait compliance.
- **Licencing:** Maintaining a licencing interface in the region through agents and supporting public online sales
- **Council:** Organisation of 6 meetings per year and development of agendas for this. Promote and conduct council elections.
- **Planning and reporting:** Preparation of annual workplan, completion of annual report and audit, long term (10-year) sportfish and game management plan development and implementation.



Breakdown of Total Cost and Hours by Output Areas

	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	Total Cost \$	Hours	Total Cost \$	Hours	Total Cost \$	Hours	Total Cost \$	Hours
<i>Species Management</i>	169,091	1948	172,354	1936	13,395	954	7,970	1444
<i>Habitat Protection</i>	340,264	2921	269,328	3056	128,334	2925	33,346	2732
<i>Angler & Hunter Participation</i>	58,143	602	68,696	754	24,584	1227	6,007	982
<i>Public Interface</i>	141,080	1706	136,638	1705	3,294	1648	836	1508
<i>Compliance</i>	107,411	904	103,437	1028	28,839	751	43,416	683
<i>Licencing</i>	62,735	30	63,925	15	60,940	5	57,311	19
<i>Council</i>	28,719	303	26,742	258	8,029	505	9,226	320
<i>Planning & Reporting</i>	27,500	259	37,147	366	7,772	494	8,456	383

Relative effort for game bird and sports fish management:

Separating management between game birds and sports fish is difficult as much of the advocacy work covers the habitat of both species. However, we've been through each specific project and estimated the proportion of time of each is relevant for sport fish or game birds.

HOURS OF WORK TO SUPPORT SPORTS FISH OR GAME BIRDS

	Sports fish	Game birds
<i>2017/18</i>	2429	2732
<i>2018/19</i>	2807	2085
<i>2019/20</i>	2702	2557
<i>2020/21</i>	2019	1990
<i>2021/22</i>	2082	2139
<i>2022/23</i>	2379	1667

Enforcement work for sport fish & game birds

A similar situation arises in trying to separate game bird and sport fish enforcement activities. Generally, a greater proportion of ranging effort is expended in relation to sports fish, because the seasons are longer, and there is a greater spread of angler activity through the season, whereas hunting effort is more sporadic after opening weekend. Unfortunately, we do not record the number of hours expended by honorary staff.

Enforcement (staff hours)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Forecast 2024
Sports Fish	203	162	209	265	430	216	1400
Game Birds	233	220	115	206	111	201	230

Enforcement action (both)	126	282	207	178	36	200	200
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Question 7

To the best of my knowledge, there has only been one complaint within the time period specified with respect to our region, which was this year and related to enforcement action taken against two unlicensed Non-Resident anglers.

Question 8

Southland staff have considerable interaction with staff throughout the organisation, but particularly with those of the Otago region. Our respective councils have signed an MOU, to reflect our shared values and foster the additional sharing of resources where it is mutually beneficial to the aspirations of our regions' anglers and hunters.

Given the small size of our organisation, much is gained by sharing specific expertise that individual staff have and combining resources on more resource-intensive activities.

Southland staff have worked with their Otago counterparts (and other F&G regions) across numerous operational areas, including but not limited to; wetland development, drift diving, ranger training,

combined ranging activities, joint boat training, electrofishing, game bird monitoring and various areas of communications.

Southland staff contribute expertise to other regions across a suite of operational areas including; leading social science research on mental health benefits of fishing, use of isotopes for diet analysis, wetland development, support for scientific research, initiating changes to pressure sensitive fisheries management and in-house legal support.

An invitation to any of our upcoming meetings

I too am heartened by the development of the new Hunting and Fishing portfolio and agree that it is appropriate recognition of how significant these activities are for the kiwi way of life.

As chair of the Southland Council, I am proud of the work we achieve in pursuance of the core functions that you identify. I would like to extend an invitation for you to attend any meeting of our Council you wish to, to further elaborate on any aspects of this report and discuss issues facing our region.

Our upcoming Council meetings are scheduled for May 30th followed by July 25th, both in Invercargill. We would be pleased if you could join us on either occasion, or any subsequent meetings.

Yours sincerely,





Chair

Southland Fish & Game Council

**SOUTHLAND FISH & GAME COUNCIL PAYMENT LIST FOR THE MARCH 2024 MEETING.
ACCOUNTS PAID SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

Direct Credits paid:

2/04/2024	BNZ	\$0.40	bank fee
24/04/2024	Roal	\$40.00	refund of bond for decoy hire
16/04/2024	Meridian Energy Ltd	\$98.45	power - Te anau office
16/04/2024	Meridian energy ltd	\$323.19	power - 17 Eye Street.
19/04/2024	Paul Garbett	\$544.00	Women anglers survey work
19/04/2024	Mararoa Motors	\$797.71	Full service - PRG681 Dwight's truck
19/04/2024	Mararoa Motors	\$50.00	Puncture repair
19/04/2024	Mararoa Motors	\$50.00	Puncture repair
19/04/2024	Peak safety training	\$2,567.26	Outdoor first aid course
19/04/2024	Automotive Solutions	\$661.01	Full Service MFQ353 Cohen's truck
19/04/2024	Automotive Solutions	\$460.00	Full Service NUF116 Jacob's truck
19/04/2024	Inland revenue	\$31,983.09	PAYE deductions
19/04/2024	McNaughton Computers	\$154.89	Labour
19/04/2024	Paul Garbett	\$684.00	Monitoring, red flad ID, data management
19/04/2024	Fiordland Marine	\$80.00	Valuation - Mclay boat
19/04/2024	Fuji Xerox	\$153.00	Photocopies
19/04/2024	Sthld Caly target club	\$200.00	Sponsorship, May School shoot
19/04/2024	F & G Eastern	\$69.40	Xero mthly sub
19/04/2024	Paul Garbett	\$310.00	Survey testing
19/04/2024	Joss Stroud	\$225.00	Cleaning 17 Eye street
19/04/2024	Carters tyre service	\$2,791.11	4 new tyres PRG681 -Dwight's truck
19/04/2024	Mararoa Motors	\$50.00	Puncture repair
22/04/2024	Velocitynet	\$244.00	Internet access
22/04/2024	Paymark Ltd	\$21.74	EFTPOS mthly sub
30/04/2024	Eyede Solutions	\$1,083.00	Fish and Game sales
1/05/2024	BNZ	\$0.40	Service fee
4/05/2024	##### One NZ Group	\$354.91	Cell phones
8/05/2024	Graphic Press & Packaging	\$328.18	Freight - Game Bird Regs books
13/05/2024	Meridian Energy Ltd	\$297.75	Power - Eye Street
13/05/2024	Meridian Energy Ltd	\$96.35	power - Te anau office
15.05/2024	BNZ	\$0.19	Merchant fee
20/05/2024	Fiordland frontier Supplies	\$169.99	Decoys
20/05/2024	Mararoa motors	\$50.00	Tyre repair
20/05/2024	E H Ball ITM	\$828.91	Timber for maimai
20/05/2024	Eastern F & G	\$69.40	Xero - mthly sub
20/05/2024	Paul Garbett	\$570.00	Wellbeing survey data
20/05/2024	Sthld District Council	\$228.22	Rates - 178 Manapouri Te anau Hway
20/05/2024	Automotive Solutions	\$857.66	Full service + wheel align MBS600
20/05/2024	E H Ball ITM	\$534.55	Timber for maimai
20/05/2024	OfficeMax	\$157.55	Stationary
20/05/2024	NZC	\$230,916.74	Levy
20/05/2024	Allied Press Ltd	\$253.00	Duck hunting season - pre season advert
20/05/2024	Wanaka helicopters	\$10,214.87	Duck monitoring flights
20/05/2024	Monda Computer Solutions	\$646.42	Annual renewal - AV & security licences
20/05/2024	Eastern F & G	\$70.05	Xero mthly sub
20/05/2024	Sthld district Council	\$120.66	Rates - 1820 Waimea Hway
20/05/2024	E H Ball ITM	\$1,240.16	20 boxes of screws for signage
20/05/2024	Paul garbett	\$380.00	Wellbeing survey data
20/05/2024	ICC	\$1,274.68	Rates - 17 Eye Street
20/05/2024	Cameo Picture Framers	\$234.90	Frame Game Bird Habitat print
20/05/2024	Inland revenue	\$17,312.54	PAYE
20/05/2024	Yellow NZ Ltd	\$598.14	Annual listing renewal
20/05/2024	Fuji Xerox	\$122.48	Photocopies
20/05/2024	Sthld District Council	\$136.43	Rates - 280 Sinclair Road
20/05/2024	NZC	\$96.60	seaflex mthly subs
20/05/2024	NZC	\$96.60	seaflex mthly subs
20/05/2024	PWFP Fire safety	\$83.95	Fire extinguisher testing
20/05/2024	Bloomers groomers	\$285.00	Toyota Hilux - pre sale grooming

Sub total **\$312,268.53**

Plus Direct Debits

21/03/2024	Paymark Ltd	\$21.74	EFTPOS mthly charge
28/03/2024	Eyede Solutions	\$296.00	Fish & Game sales
10/04/2024	BP Oil NZ Ltd	\$2,990.54	fuel - fleet
3/04/2024	One NZ group	\$377.13	Cellphones
10/05/2024	BP Oil NZ Ltd	\$2,581.53	Fuel - vehicle fleet
20/05/2024	Velocitynet	\$244.00	Internet access
20/05/2024	Paymark	\$21.74	EFTPOS mthly sub

12/04/2024	BNZ Visa	\$2,186.36	NZ Transport Agency - RUC MBS600	772.44
			Pak n Sav - milk	2.49
			Freshchoice - groceries	11.78
			Pak n Sav - coffee	21.87
			Pita pit - catering, 1st Aid course	132.9
			NZ Post - Te Anau - courier rod	22
			Paper Plus Gore - Book (Ben)	39.99
			Ascot Park Hotel - Bill re chopper flight accomm	155
			The warehouse - laminating	18.75
			BNZ - card fees \$6.25 x 7	43.75
			2Talk Ltd - prepaid landline calls	51.75
			Bombay palace - Catering - Council meeting	244.6
			LINZ - title search (Jacob)	6
			LINZ - totle search - (Jacob)	6
			Mobil northern Auto - fuel top up for loan car	6.36
			Pak n Sav - roceries	36.07
			NZ transport Agency - Rego MBS600	207.83
			Winton Bakery - Zane	23
			Pak N Sav - milk	2.89
			Microsoft - 365 sub	217.35
			Farmlands - gudgeon thru posts (2)	44
			Freshchoice - milk	2.55
			Marine DEALS - Staff gear allowance (Bill)	49.98
			Mokotua Store - coffee Zane	15
			Woolworths - groceries	9.97
			Mitre 10 mega - measure tap, Hammer (Ben)	48.78
			PGG Wrightsons - Safety gumboots (2) Zane	332.23
			NZ Post Te anau - courier	12
			Hunting & Fishing - bait & gear (kids fishing)	37.96
			New World - bait	6.97
			Pak n Sav- gocerics	19.29
			Repco - high lift jack	195
			E Hayes & Sons -Galv chain, cotter hooks, chain hook	51.59
			Outdoor Shop - staff gear allowance (Bill) earmuffs	145.84

		Garmin - Freedom plan	25
		E H Ball & Son - purlin screws	62.01
13/05/2024	BNZ Visa	\$2,570.99 Pak n Sav - groceries	25.41
		NZ Transport Agency - RUC QHG257	772.44
		NZ Transport Agency - Rego KTF247	58.48
		2Talk - prepaid landline calls top up	30
		2Talk - prepaid landline calls top up	30
		NZ Transport Agency - Rego trailer 34FLU	31.09
		Pak n Sav - groceries	31.96
		Woolworths - milk	2.5
		Te Anau Paperplus - toner cartridges	10
		K Mart - rop - Didymo sampling	216.96
		Fiordland Medical Practice - Flu jab Bill	40
		Freshchoice - milk	2.59
		PGG Wrightsons - coupling joiners, waterline TAKF	59.98
		2Talk prepaid calls	51.75
		Mitre 10 Te Anau - Bars bugs	8.49
		Microsoft 365 mthly sub	217.35
		Hunting & Fishing Ltd	219.98
		Pak n Sav - groceries	22.22
		Woolworths - milk	2.5
		Mitre 10 Te Anau - pins for trailers	9.16
		TradeMe listing for Truck KTF247	299
		Southern Adventure - staff gear allowance - Steve	13.99
		Hunting & Fishing - lures TAKF	134.95
		Noel Lemming - Webcam	84.8
		PGG Wrightsons - Wire jopiners	4.39
		Garmin - freedom safety plan	25

Grand Total	\$323,558.56
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Profit and Loss

Fish and Game New Zealand, Southland Region For the year ended 31 August 2024

	2024	2024 BUDGET 2024	VARIANCE TO BUDGET	% OF BUDGET SPENT
REVENUE				
Fish and Game licence sales				
Fish Sales	1,143,700	1,219,610	75,910	94%
Game licence	283,469	438,792	155,323	65%
Non-Resident Licence Levy Revenue	198	-	(198)	-
Designated Waters Licence Sales - Southland	17,662	-	(17,662)	-
Water quality & ecosystem monitoring	-	2,000	2,000	-
Information & Prosecutions	-	5,000	5,000	-
Total Fish and Game licence sales	1,445,029	1,665,402	220,373	87%
Interest				
Interest Public Trust	865	-	(865)	-
Interest Other	6,864	42,769	35,905	16%
Total Interest	7,729	42,769	35,040	18%
Other Income				
Contract Income	9,379	-	(9,379)	-
Fiordland compliance & CCD	-	25,000	25,000	-
Diversion Scheme Fishing	10,670	-	(10,670)	-
Fine Income (Courts)	581	-	(581)	-
MLC Fish Pass Management- Meridian	9,777	10,000	223	98%
MPI - Biosecurity CCD programme	30,000	-	(30,000)	-
NIWA Monitoring	26,126	-	(26,126)	-
Rental - Te Anau Cottage	9,391	-	(9,391)	-
Rent - Office Space Eye St	1,350	1,850	500	73%
Sale of Products	589	-	(589)	-
Eftpos transactions	395	-	(395)	-
Total Other Income	98,257	36,850	(61,407)	267%
Total REVENUE	1,551,015	1,745,021	194,006	89%

EXPENSES

Outputs

Species management

Population monitoring	9,036	20,550	11,514	44%
Harvest assessment	-	2,000	2,000	-
Releases	106	150	44	71%
Total Species management	9,142	22,700	13,558	40%

Habitat protection & management

RMA Consents evaluation	-	50	50	-
RMA Plans & Policy	-	50	50	-
ES Water & Land Plan Appeal	2,729	-	(2,729)	-
Works & management	-	2,100	2,100	-

	2024	2024 BUDGET 2024	VARIANCE TO BUDGET	% OF BUDGET SPENT
Assisted habitat	1,940	110	(1,830)	1,764%
Assessing & monitoring	12	-	(12)	-
Total Habitat protection & management	4,681	2,310	(2,371)	203%
Angler & Hunter participation				
Access	15,012	58,500	43,488	26%
Other Publications	1,186	5,400	4,214	22%
Pressure sensitive fisheries	14,547	400	(14,147)	3,637%
Training & R3	2,618	1,500	(1,118)	175%
Total Angler & Hunter participation	33,363	65,800	32,437	51%
Public interface				
Communication	2,367	1,200	(1,167)	197%
Public promotions	-	130	130	-
Visitor facilities	495	300	(195)	165%
Fish in schools programme	186	605	419	31%
Total Public interface	3,049	2,235	(814)	136%
Compliance				
Ranging	1,081	1,250	169	86%
Ranger training	-	3,600	3,600	-
Compliance	4,567	4,700	133	97%
Total Compliance	5,648	9,550	3,902	59%
Licensing				
Commission	57,596	95,607	38,011	60%
Total Licensing	57,596	95,607	38,011	60%
Council				
Council meetings	3,010	9,500	6,490	32%
Total Council	3,010	9,500	6,490	32%
Planning & reporting				
Mngt Plan	-	1,000	1,000	-
Reporting	9,245	12,000	2,755	77%
National Liaison	278	1,500	1,222	19%
Total Planning & reporting	9,523	14,500	4,977	66%
Total Outputs	126,013	222,202	96,189	57%
Overheads				
Employee related costs				
Salaries and wages	493,272	738,350	245,078	67%
Fringe Benefit Tax	-	5,000	5,000	-
ACC Levy	-	1,300	1,300	-
Staff training & other expenses	5,398	9,600	4,202	56%
KiwiSaver contributions	18,752	-	(18,752)	-
Total Employee related costs	517,422	754,250	236,828	69%
Other expenses				

Profit and Loss

	2024	2024 BUDGET 2024	VARIANCE TO BUDGET	% OF BUDGET SPENT
Communications & Consumables	10,822	14,400	3,578	75%
Field equipment	991	4,500	3,509	22%
General	4,951	29,606	24,655	17%
Office equipment	2,760	9,000	6,240	31%
Office premises	16,609	19,700	3,091	84%
Vehicles	29,005	35,234	6,229	82%
Total Other expenses	65,138	112,440	47,302	58%
Total Overheads	582,560	866,690	284,130	67%
Depreciation	-	15,164	15,164	-
Total EXPENSES	708,573	1,104,056	395,483	64%
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	842,442	640,965	(201,477)	131%
Less other Expenses				
NZ Fish & Game Levy	(602,392)	(803,189)	(200,798)	75%
Total Less other Expenses	(602,392)	(803,189)	(200,798)	75%
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICT)	240,050	(162,224)	(402,274)	-148%

FUTURE STRUCTURE WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS TO NZFGC

Summary: These recommendations should be considered, along with additional insights that could be integrated into future strategies, especially concerning regional autonomy, public engagement, and attracting skilled and diverse council members.

Recommendations to NZFGC

That the Chair of NZFGC be elected from among the FGC councillors and serve a three-year term.

That the chair's appointment to NZFGC and all regional chairs be confirmed no later than the 28th of February each year.

That the Chair of NZFGC be a paid position.

NB: Legislation change required

That the composition of the NZFGC include members who are either elected or appointed by the regions.

Their appointment should be for a three-year term. Three-year terms should extend beyond the three-year election cycle that is held in the regions so that major changes to the NZFGC does not occur every three years following the regional elections.

That the size of NZFGC reflect the number of regions, with the NZFGC empowered to appoint additional independent members with relevant expertise as needed to cover skill gaps. These appointments should be for a specified term and would be in addition to the regular members elected or appointed by the regions. This could include Te Ao Māori appointments with full voting rights.

That all Fish and Game Councillors receive financial compensation in the form of a meeting allowance payable on meetings attended.

That the voting process for NZFGC and FGC elections be retained with licence holders casting one vote for the FGC and each FGC either elect or appoint one of their members to NZFGC. Note: FGC nominees on the NZFGC provide a direct link back to the regional councils.

That the existing regional structure be retained, while also considering the potential for merger or amalgamation of smaller regions with larger ones.

That there should be no more than 7 Regional Managers, focused on key operational functions, within the organisation. Note: This will require some Regional Managers having to manage staff across several regions. The current structure is not sustainable with too many managers and too much duplication of functions across the smaller regions. This situation needs to be addressed with urgency.

<p>That each FGC comprise a maximum of 9 members, with a maximum of 8 elected, and the option of an iwi nominee with full voting rights. This option will be pursued if desired by Māori.</p> <p>NB: Legislation change required</p>
<p>That each region has no more than 3 subregions, with 1 person to be elected from each subregion. Note: Regions that have merged may require additional subregions which can be determined during the merger process.</p>
<p>That candidates hold a primary residential address applicable to the region or subregion they wish to represent, as shown on the NZ Electoral Roll.</p> <p>NB: Legislation change required</p>
<p>That the electoral roll automatically includes any NZ resident licence-holders from the previous year with no opt-in requirement.</p> <p>NB: Legislation Change required</p>
<p>That the electoral system becomes an electronic one with a postal option to those who request it. Note: The election process is becoming a very expensive one for NZFG and any means that will increase participation and reduce costs should be pursued.</p>
<p>That the NZFGC should review the eligibility requirements for voting in respect to type of licence held with 2 adults on a current season family licence being able to vote individually.</p> <p>NB: Legislation Change required</p>
<p>That a "fit and proper" test for candidates be implemented to maintain high standards of governance. Note: This will require legal advice but could include police vetting and/or the signing of an affidavit when standing for election.</p> <p>NB: Legislation Change required</p>

Additional Insights to be considered by the organisation:

- Maintaining regional autonomy while ensuring cohesive functioning with the NZFGC should be encouraged.
- Service delivery to sports fishers and game bird hunters with a focus on maintaining the resource and providing access to fish and hunt is key to the survival of the organisation and this requires strong regional focus.
- The importance of local staff and regional contact was highlighted.
- The need for transparency and public awareness of the organisation's work was emphasised.
- Promotion of hunting and fishing as a healthy recreation, the protection of the environment, and education to children should form part of the role of F&G.
- As part of Election process/campaign, there be a concerted effort to promote broader representation, emphasising diversity and equity to ensure a more inclusive and representative electoral outcome.
- Address iwi representation actively.
- Some functions done within the regions would be better managed nationally, while operational delivery would remain within the regions.
- Legislative Changes: Be prepared to present changes to Parliament, if necessary.

- Structure Optimisation: Regularly assess and optimise staffing and resources in line with the new governance structure.
- Collaboration and Cooperation: Encourage regions to collaborate, especially considering potential amalgamations.
- Transition Plan: Develop a comprehensive plan for transitioning to new governance structures, drawing on the experiences of the Wellington/Taranaki merger process.
- Funding and Resource Allocation: Determine funding needs for different governance structures, with consideration to the Future Finance Working Group recommendations.
- That the NZFGC consider initiating discussions on the management of the Taupo fishery.

Gerard Karalus - Chair
Future Structure Working Group

DRAFT

The Future Finance of Fish & Game

Prepared by - Future Finance Working Group

March 2024

Background

The Future Finance Working Group (FFWG) was formed in February 2023 and had its first meeting on 27 February 2023. Members appointed were D Phibbs (chairperson) and D Oakley (from National Council) and N Juby (Chairs from Regional Councils - North Canterbury and Auckland /Waikato respectively).

The working group was tasked by New Zealand Fish & Game with taking a greenfield approach and to make recommendations to the National Council by November 2023 on 'how we might go about improving the future financing of New Zealand Fish & Game';

A Terms of Reference was adopted by the Working Group in April 2023 and presented to New Zealand Fish & Game.

Initially a brainstorming session was carried out by the Working Group and several areas were identified to explore in more detail. However, it was important to - "communicate to the organisation that there will be a limit to what the Working Group can achieve under current legislation. We need to manage regional expectations by communicating that this process is largely driven by the need to be financially efficient in tough times. It is therefore unlikely, irrespective of the funding model that we recommend, that any regions will see large increases in budgets in the short term."

There were a wide range of topics that the Working Group covered and explored in detail. In broad terms these included but were not limited to -

- Financial efficiency within the organisation (increasing income and controlling expenditure)
- Reserves and reserves policy and practice.
- Licence forecasting
- Centralising licence sales and income
- Budgeting
- Review past reports and advice
- Governance and Finance

The Group explored and gained an understanding of the different aspects of the New Zealand Fish and Game financing model at specific meetings over several months and developed possible improvements and solutions to some of the issues facing the organisation. These are presented under similar topic headings in the report.

Discussion and potential solutions

Financial efficiency

Examining the New Zealand Fish & Game regions overall, it is evident that there is scope to improve financial efficiency. Resources are potentially wasted duplicating activity and functions which will have a financial cost to each region and the organisation as a whole. One of the key challenges the organisation faces is an aging and shrinking licenceholder base, the resulting financial implications, and what to do about it, therefore, developing a strategy to bring all stakeholders together to address

the challenges and achieve consensus is a key aspect if the organisation is to achieve any real financial efficiency.

In 2023 NZ Fish & Game commissioned Gary Crawford an experienced financial professional to investigate the financial efficiency of the regional Fish & Game organisations and come up with recommendations from an independent perspective. Although this report is separate from Gary's report and recommendations to New Zealand Fish & Game, this report will not go into in-depth financial analysis. However, there is likely to be some synergy in the areas of focus and potential issues within the organisation.

Some of the obvious areas are - exploring bulk purchasing power for assets or a common auditor, developing a common set of financial and other policies and procedures, exploring options for centralising financial policies and functions - considering legislative constraints and regional autonomy. There will likely be good financial and efficient practices within many of the regions that could be shared throughout the organisation by baselining a 'financially efficient standard'.

Increasing our Revenue

Reliance on licence income as a source of revenue is one of the weaknesses of Fish & Game as a whole. If licence sales are decreasing for whatever reason – the salmon issue in Canterbury is a good example – then this puts pressure on the organisation to achieve its financial goals. This is exacerbated in times of high inflation as increasing the licence cost can reduce licence unit sales due to consumer affordability. This appears to be a real problem in the 2023-24 season.

NZ Fish & Game has incorporated in its strategy the steps to maintain and increase licence sales. However, increasing other external revenue is an area that needs greater exploration.

- Many other organisations receive substantial funding from donations and bequests, Forest & Bird is an example as it asks for small weekly donations. This organisation needs to explore in more detail how to get our message out there (including overseas licence holders), especially the work that New Zealand Fish & Game does protecting our natural environment.
- Government and other Grants. Can this be linked to habitat protection? For example the jobs for nature fund.
- Use the online licence system as a way to increase revenue. There may be people who would pay more for a "special licence" or provide a donation, make this available on the licence purchasing system as an option. Or perhaps use the facility to sell merchandise.
- Identify 'lazy assets' within the organisation that could be better repurposed to help fund core functions.
- Utilising assets for functions; weddings, corporate etc. We have great office locations in places that incorporate scenic grounds.
- Many regions currently negotiate mitigation payments from entities such as power generation companies that affect angling and hunting opportunities – there may be potential to expand these.
- Provision of other services to organisations.

Resourcing and Budgeting

One of the key questions is, what is the optimal way of efficiently funding the organisation so that the organisation and licence holder get the best bang for their buck? There have been reports prepared for Fish & Game in the past that have considered this.

The key aspect is to ensure that scarce funds are utilised efficiently to enable the licence holder to hunt and fish as cheaply as possible. The status quo from a financial perspective is probably not sustainable and changes need to be made to ensure the long-term success of the organisation. Organisational costs are increasing due to inflation while revenue remains static or is slowly sinking. The overall goal is to create a budgeting system that is fair, transparent, and incentivises regions to increase licence sales and raise external funding while allowing them autonomy to allocate financial resources where they will maximise the benefits to their region. Regions must support the proposed budgeting system and the need to address current funding challenges and concerns.

This report recommends a new financing approach for the organisation, partially based on angler and hunter activity. The funding model needs to be objective and data-driven, not subjective. An objective approach encourages collaboration and resource sharing. Any new approach adopted must not need amalgamations or legislative changes.

There is a need to address the issue of where licences are sold and how to coordinate sales. The idea of centralising licence sales via New Zealand Fish & Game and distributing the funds to regions accordingly was also considered and has some merit but is unlikely to be possible under current legislation. This could be considered in the future if legislative changes are made.

To move forward with a financial budgeting system that is fair and equitable for all regions. This amount would involve setting a base budget for regions based on objective numbers and provide a flexible amount for discretionary funding (contestable funding). This system would provide certainty for regions and incentivise them to increase licence sales. It is important for the organisation to embrace these changes and work together to create a more efficient, effective, and sustainable future for hunting and fishing in New Zealand.

In addition, New Zealand Fish and Game need to determine the best way to resource the organisation efficiently. Is it best to fund certain functions like legal, resource management, human resourcing, communication, policy, administration, finance, and accounting in each region? These are predominantly fixed operating costs - circa 80% of costs. Or to have these roles within the wider organisation available so that every regional organisation has access to these services. This does not mean centralisation as the operational staff could reside within the regions as is the case currently. Resourcing common functions in this way is more cost-effective than each region providing the services autonomously and duplicating them, also freeing up staff to carry out the work that more directly benefits licence holders. This central back-office work promotes specialisation and reduces the overall cost to licence holders.

Recommendation 1. A shared service for RMA work

Creation of a National Resource Management Act (RMA) "department", led by a senior RMA team leader. The team leader will report to the National Council (or CEO who would report to NZC) but not necessarily be based in Wellington. RMA staff would be regionally based throughout the country but priorities would be set by the National Council in consultation with regions. They would undertake work nationally on a priority basis.

There are several benefits in favour of centralising RMA work.

1. Workload varies regionally depending on what is happening - the district plan cycle, major projects etc. Centralised staff management allows allocating staff time to the regions with the most need at that time.
2. Replication of skills. Once an RMA project has been completed, the staff member can join a team in another region carrying out similar functions.
3. It enables the setting of national priorities in RMA work.
4. It enables staff development and appropriate supervision.

There is also a case for applying this approach to other functions within the organisation as set out earlier.

Other shared services that should be considered are –

- Legal
- Resource management
- Human resources
- Policy
- Administration
- Payroll
- Finance
- Accounting

Recommendation 2. Separate out wages and general budgets

Implement a system where payroll and human resources are managed nationally. Staff would continue to be appointed and managed by regions to suit their individual needs. Performance evaluations and goal setting would be undertaken regionally but payroll and HR are managed from a central location. The system is analogous to the NZ education system. For example - the school board hires the principal. The principal hires and manages staff but they are paid directly by the Ministry of Education.

The benefits are -

1. It allows bulk funding of regions (excluding salaries) while maintaining staff job security.
2. It simplifies managers and councillors' jobs.
3. It allows the standardisation of employment conditions.
4. It enables a consistent approach to HR oversight and the requirement to be a good employer.
5. It provides a better pathway to facilitate career development.

Staff numbers could be set collaboratively with the regions based on baseline information (from Crawford's analysis). It is incumbent on the New Zealand Council to set and justify staffing levels at each region. The New Zealand Council will need to develop a robust and objective system to

determine staff numbers. Some regions will be able to justify staff numbers above the line based on their local conditions and aspirations. However, these regions should have staff requirements reviewed annually to see if they are meeting set organisational objectives.

Consider opportunities and options to manage staff outside of the specific regions so that frees up the time of Regional Managers or reducing Manager numbers to two or four for NZ who specialise in managing the staff and work allocation for each region. Each region could have an Area Manager who does not manage the staff or report to the Council. The cost of employing 12 Regional Managers is 13% of the total national budget and presents an opportunity to reduce costs while not impacting the service line delivery.

Recommendation 3. The remaining budget (after salary and wages) is bulk funded.

Use the levy and grant system to bulk fund regions (excluding salaries). Regional councils can then decide how to spend these funds according to local needs (but also in line with the organisational strategy). The New Zealand Council (NZC) will monitor and audit according to their current statutory obligation to check that regions are meeting their own obligations. But this monitoring is focused on outputs, rather than intensive management of the regions. Calculating the exact proportions is beyond the group's capabilities so the proportions outlined below are our "ballpark" working figures and were used as an example to highlight how an allocation may be done. Further analysis and testing need to be carried out in future by NZ Fish & Game to determine if this manner of allocation is feasible and likely to be acceptable to regions or if other scenarios are appropriate.

This work should be carried out by an independent party.

After the principal allocation has been set aside for salaries within the organisation -

- ¼ of remaining license revenue is distributed based on proportional angler/ hunter usage – based on the most recent angler / hunter surveys.
- ¼ of remaining license revenue is distributed based on actual sales – LEC's averaged over the previous three seasons.
- ¼ of remaining license revenue is distributed based on contestable funding- 3-5 year term.
- ¼ of remaining license revenue is allocated to NZC/RMA. This provides a fixed budget for NZC.

The principle of the funding model should be based on angling and hunting participation and be fair and equitable to all regions including NZC. The reason for a formula based on criteria is that no single perfect system exists. By combining several criteria, it may be possible to get the most equitable result.

The criteria is provided in more detail in the Appendix at the end of this report as an example.

Recommendation 4. NZC independently reviews and collates all regional (and NZC) annual financial audits and regularly audits outputs.

NZC has historically not met the legislative requirements to audit regions. This failure has led to three DOC-initiated audits and caused significant organisational damage. Audits should be routine, starting with annual "checks of audits" by the NZC. All regions are audited annually but these are not reviewed by NZC to the Groups knowledge. Because this proposal gives regions significantly more autonomy with their non-salary budgets, it is important that outcomes are monitored effectively. The Conservation Act very clearly specifies that auditing regions is a central NZC role.

Audits are seen by some as punitive but need to become a regular (business as usual) health check.

Recommendation 5. That budgets are set based on the above-suggested formula but actual grants and levies are adjusted to reflect actual license sales at the end of the season.

One current failure of the system is that budgets are approved and levies / grants set based on forecasted license sales. If more licenses are sold in a region the region keeps the additional revenue. If fewer licenses are sold, the region must use reserves to top up the shortfall.

When license sales fall below that forecasted in a levy-paying region then levy is paid on money that was never received. While occasionally is sustainable a sustained decline will deplete reserves. When license sales exceed the forecast this money is often put into reserves at a regional level.

If reserves drop below 20%, NZC will then top this up. This leads to some regions building up large reserves and others requiring a reserve top up. This is due to the challenges of forecasting future sales (LEQ's).

It is recommended that budgets be set, and the final levy/grant is adjusted at the end of the season to reflect actual sales. This means that all regions will have the budgeted amount of money remaining - not an amount that is higher or lower than forecast.

This reduces the need for reserves and the issues and complexity that this creates. Of course dedicated reserves would remain as the status quo.

If an event like a cyclone, earthquake, or covid causes a large reduction in activity and license sales, the levy for that year will be reduced once actual sales are finalised. This means that the region will not have to deplete reserves for that year. If proportional activity and license sales for a region are higher than expected, the budget for the following three years will be lifted but the current year remains constant.

Recommendation 6. External funds generated within a region remain with the region.

Regions will have the freedom and incentive to move beyond license sales as their sole source of revenue. This is positive for the organisation.

There is a need for better governance performance to avoid potential issues at regional and national level. This includes financial literacy so that governors at regional and national level ask the right questions to reduce dependency on managers and staff to avoid potential financial issues.

There should be financial literacy skills and training for both regional and national councillors. It is important to have skilled and trained individuals on boards for effective governance be it of a financial nature or overall. To take this a step further independent experts on councils would be a good step to both improve governance and improve financial literacy. The experts could be appointed or co-opted on to Councils.

What would the proposed changes mean?

The Future Finance Working Group has endeavoured to come up with improvements and practical recommendations that do not require legislative changes but would improve and incentivise the financial efficiency of the organisation.

Any proposed change generates uncertainty which can cause apprehension. NZ Fish & Game will need to carefully consider and plan a way forward to minimise the negative effects of change if it chooses to implement the recommendations from the Working Group. Good communication is a key aspect. As is the integration of any recommendations from Gary Crawford's report.

NZ Fish & Game should carefully evaluate how change affects -

- Managers and staff
- Licence holders
- Governors
- Stakeholders

And come up with a plan that addresses the concerns that are identified. For example - resistance from regions and staff needing to move. There is a possibility of centralisation of some roles without physical relocation i.e. reporting structure could still be through NZC CEO.

Professional help will likely be required to develop and implement this plan, this would be better done externally to prevent a conflict-of-interest situation. This will need to be overseen by the NZC.

Final word

Although this report has only considered options and recommendations that don't require legislative change which was potentially problematic under the previous government, there may be better outcomes achieved if greater analysis was carried out incorporating improvements to the organisation that would require legislative change.

There are indications from Fish and Games' new Minister that the new government is more receptive to changes to the organisation that would require legislative change. Future analysis could consider and incorporate recommendations from previous reports prepared concerning Fish and Game that would require legislative changes however this was not within the scope of the Working Group.

In the future it may be possible to review the scope of not requiring legislative change – there is a new government and there may be opportunities for NZ Fish & Game to push for legislative change. So, we need to categorise the legislative changes vs non legislative which is a make-do approach.

Appendix

An example criterion for allocating a funding model that was explored by the FFWG is as follows –

1. Allocation according to usage is logical - but has some limitations.

- Some resources cost more or less to manage than others.
- Anglers / hunters that fish / hunt frequently more highly are worth more to a region than those that go out irregularly
- It promotes activity, not licence sales
- It puts significant pressure on National angler and hunter surveys – both of which have significant inherent margins of error caused by statistical accuracy and timing - a three yearly survey is vulnerable to local conditions such as drought, floods and societal factors (eg, Covid lockdowns) that coincide with the survey. These issues will need to be considered.

One change recommended is from total usage to "proportional" usage. By "proportional" we mean a proportion of where each individual angler / hunter surveyed spends their time. For example, if there are 2 hunters in 2 regions. One hunter hunts for 100 hours in a season, 70% in Region A and 30% in Region B. The other hunter hunts for 10 hours in a season, 30% in Region A and 70% in Region B. With allocation based on pure activity, Region A would receive 73 hours of activity and Region B 37 hours. However, because both hunters pay the same license fee, it makes more sense to split this proportionally - in this case they cancel each other out and their contribution to each region would be equal. This means it is better to focus on where their activity takes place by percentage, rather than hours.

2. Allocation according to license sales

- recognises that anglers / hunters would prefer not to travel to hunt / fish and generally only do so because of a lack of local opportunities. Some of their license fee should be used to develop and protect nearby resources.
- rewards regions for promoting and selling licenses - even when activity takes place out of region.
- encourages regions to act collaboratively to sell licenses.

3. Some contestable funding recognises that regions are different. Some resources cost more to maintain, and others may need development. However, contestable funding shouldn't be in perpetuity as circumstances change. Therefore, all contestable funding should be stringently evaluated against the national strategy and objectives and will need to be reapplied for every 3 years.