

**WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON  
TUESDAY 12 JUNE 2018 AT 3.00PM AT RSA – CLUB WAIRARAPA, 20 ESSEX STREET,  
MASTERTON**

1. **Present:**  
Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Dan Waechter, Paul Shortis, Malcolm Francis, Andy Tannock, Don Scott, Andrew Morris.
  
2. **In Attendance:**  
Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Hamish Carnachan, Matt Kavermann.  
Steve Doughty (NZ Fish & Game Council Consultant)  
Licenceholders: Howard Thompson, Simon Robertson, John Pansters.
  
3. **Apologies:**  
Councillors Eric Neumann, Brad Johnson, Jim Cook, Marc Flaws, Chris O'Meara, Simon Muckley.  
Staff: Peter Wilson, Adam Canning.

It was then moved that:

***the apologies be accepted.***

**Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter**

Carried

Chairman Cotsilinis welcomed members of the public. He indicated that he had a prior speaking engagement commitment and was likely to leave prior to the conclusion of the meeting.

4. **Conflicts of Interest**  
A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of Interest. No new conflicts of interest were declared.
  
5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting of 27 March 2018**  
After a brief discussion it was moved that:  
***the Minutes of the Meeting of Wellington Fish & Game Council of 27 March 2018 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.***  

**Dan Waechter/Don Scott**  
Carried
  
6. **Matters Arising**  
Mr Teal gave a brief overview of actions undertaken since the previous meeting.

Mr Teal confirmed that the contestable funding applications were partly considered by NZ Council and Fish & Game managers – underwriting the public liability insurance proposed for the Upper Rangitikei River was approved for one year to allow assessment of financial exposure, and salary increases on merit basis were deferred until an internal salary comparison could be collated.

NZ Council was requested to draft a summary paper of all research that has been conducted pertaining to potential effects of 1080 on trout fisheries.

**7. NZ Council Business – Meeting 27 and 28 April 2018**

Councillor Morris confirmed that NZ Council had considered the wide variance internal of staff remuneration and conditions, and had sought independent external advice on collating remuneration relativities to enable NZC to consider contestable funding aspects. Councillor Shortis noted that there should be awareness of NZ Council's audit functions being used to focus on detail for staff remuneration with a view to potentially control such, given that it was a function of the regional Fish & Game Councils under legislation to employ and remunerate staff. It was further discussed that individual regions currently had the ability to apply flexibility in approaches and concern was expressed that attempts could be used to apply simplistic standards to all regions.

Councillor Morris noted that North Canterbury F&GC had been over budget (operating deficits) for nearly a decade and a substantial accrued deficit of approximately \$750,000 had occurred.

Councillor Morris noted that two research projects had been approved – a NZ wide independent review of hatchery purpose and operation, and native fish and trout interaction study. A mallard project that involved defining vectors for disease transfer was ultimately withdrawn.

Councillor Morris noted that NZ Council had considered changing the ratios for licence categories after being presented with a proposal by Northland F&GC appointee Noel Birchall. Discussion ensued on the expectation that a review would be undertaken after three years and tinkering with ratios prior to completion of a review could prove futile. The review could even potentially recommend that the new short term categories be abandoned to revert to a simple system.

It was then moved that

***The report by Councillor Morris on the NZ Fish & Game Council meeting held on 27 and 28 April 2018 be received.***

**Malcolm Francis/Paul Shortis**

Carried

8. **Public Participation**

Chairman Cotsilinis invited members of the public to speak on any particular issues – and there were no speakers forthcoming.

9. **Health & Safety Update**

Mr Teal provided an overview of the Health & Safety reporting. Mr Teal noted that it would be prudent to obtain a building warrant of fitness given a recent incident in the Palmerston North office with petrochemical odours entering the building via an internal sewer. It was then moved that

***A warrant of fitness of the Palmerston North Office be obtained, following appropriate quotations of services, to ensure a safe and healthy work environment***

**Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter**

Carried

After further discussion it was moved that

***The Health and Safety Report overview for April and May 2018 be received***

**Andrew Morris/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

10. **2018/19 Licence Fee Recommendations**

Council consider the paper ***2018/19 Licence Fee Recommendation*** (undated/received 8/5/2018) by Martin Taylor (Chief Executive for NZ Council) to enable consultation and provide a recommendation to the Minister of Conservation. The proposal was to recommend *the 2018/19 licence fees be based on an adult whole season fee of \$130 and the game licence to be based on an adult whole season fee of \$93 plus \$3 for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp (GST inclusive)*. In addition, it was requested that regional Fish & Game Councils consider the adjustment of ratios set for fixing fees against the adult whole season licence fee (local area, short-break and NZ resident adult day) and a proposal for new non-resident sub-categories and ratios (whole season junior, adult day, junior day and child day).

Chairman Cotsilinis considered that any increases should be aligned with previous principles that guided setting licence fees, especially if above CPI increase was proposed:

1. Setting the licence fee to cover the costs of operation as defined by budget requirements
2. Wellington Fish & Game Council noted that in the past, it has been a directive of the Minister of Conservation and Treasury to attempt to restrict licence fee increases at or below the CPI rate.
3. To be a good employer in the public sector under section 26(T) of the Conservation Act 1987 in terms of being consistent with Crown Entities Act

and State Sector Act - paying a fair and equitable remuneration within the organisation.

Discussion ensued on the acceptability of the proposed increases and whether savings could be made from within the contestable funding process initially approved. Specific examples were noted and varying opinions were provided on potential savings but overall the increase would still be in the order of \$2 or \$3. Further discussion ensued on the level of scrutiny in the Fish & Game budgeting system, and how there appeared to be regional differences in approach to prudent management. Councillor Tannock noted that while the licence fee increase as proposed was modest, he still considered it worthwhile to point out where there was not consistent approach to budget applications by some Councils. He considered there was a risk of funds being diluted across multiple regions/entities given the justification for some fund applications is questionable at best. Following scrutiny it would be preferable for these funds to be allocated to worthwhile projects such as marketing function projects that will benefit the organisation as a whole.

It was then moved that

***Wellington Fish & Game Council advise NZ Council that it supported the proposed fee increase of \$3 on a Whole Season Fishing Licence and \$2 on a Whole Season Game Bird Hunting Licence (by majority decision)***

**Malcolm Francis/Andy Tannock**

Carried  
(majority)

It was further moved

***When advising the NZ Council of this decision that Wellington Fish & Game Council request NZ Council to give further scrutiny (on examples discussed at this meeting) to ensure the budgets are allocated equitably across regions and NZ Council, and express dissatisfaction in the budget-setting process that is provisioning for potential budget surplus (even if modest).***

**Malcolm Francis/Andy Tannock**

Carried

Councillor Shortis considered there may be a potential need for improved external oversight and potentially a ground-up evaluation of bulk funding and fund distribution.

#### Ratios Adjustment For Setting Category Fees Against The Adult Whole Season Licence Fee

Discussion ensued on the proposed ratios that were included in the consultation document. It was considered that the Non-Resident Licence is

too low and should be treated separately – especially given the recent changes in the exchange rates which is more favourable to overseas anglers. Further discussion ensued on US examples where non-resident licence holders paid between 2 ½ to 4 times the resident angler rate.

It was then moved that

*Wellington Fish & Game Council would support the proposed ratios, but this be formally reviewed by the end of 2018 calendar year. It considered it imperative that NZ Fish & Game Council commission a review of the pricing structure and appropriateness of licence categories for fishing licence as was intended to be completed at the end of year 3 since their introduction.*

*Wellington Fish & Game Council would request that the Non-resident licence fee be investigated in relation to international experiences and what the market will bear.*

Paul Shortis/Andy Tannock

Carried

Councillor Tannock considered that the current licence category mix that included a local regional licence was a retrograde step to having the single nationally available licence – and he would continue to advocate for the latter approach.

**11. Merit Awards for Recognition of Contributions to Fish & Game**

John Pansters was presented an award to recognise his considerable contribution in time and commitment in assisting Fish & Game monitor the resource in the Wairarapa in recent decades and organise support of local anglers to achieve such.

*[Acclamation].*

Simon Robertson was presented an award to recognise his considerable contribution in time and commitment in assisting Fish & Game monitor the resource in the Wairarapa, including managing key projects ( in a voluntary capacity) in monitoring trout in important spawning streams.

*[Acclamation].*

**12. Draft Anglers Notice 2018/2019**

Dr Kavermann presented the report of supporting information for recommendations to the Anglers Notice for 2018/19 and provided an explanation of each of the recommendations.

It was then moved that

***Season conditions for the Kiriwhakapa and Mikimiki streams and Waipoua river be season open from 1 October – 30 April , for flyfishing and spin fishing only, a one fish limit, and a maximum fish take of 450mm.***

Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter

Carried

It was then further moved

***Season conditions for the Managakokeke Stream be season open from 1 October – 30 April , for flyfishing and spin fishing only, a one fish limit, and a maximum fish take of 450mm.***

Dan Waechter /Malcolm Francis

Carried

It was then moved

***Confirm previous Council position that a charge of \$25 be proposed for the Upper Rangitikei Backcountry Licence to cover public liability insurance requirements***

Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter

Carried

Discussion ensued on access to Lake Waitawa and the verbal request by landowners to consider delisting the site as a designated coarse fishery. Council noted its disapproval that the current situation left one coarse angling club with exclusive access and use, and considered that it reasonable that anglers must seek access from the landowner (with contact details available). Council considered that in representing the aspirations of all coarse anglers that the fishing should be available to all.

It was then moved

***Lake Waitawa remain on the listed coarse fishing waters but anglers must request access***

Malcolm Francis/Andy Tannock

Carried

**13. Rangitikei River Trout Fishery Management Report**

Dr Kavermann provided a brief overview of the information in the report ***Project Report 1112 – Rangitikei River Trout Fishery Management*** (June 2018) by Dr Kavermann. It was noted that the effect of the flushing flows on the Moawhanga River were not particularly effective in flushing sediment but numbers of trout appeared to be unaffected. It was also noted that Lake Snow (an algal bloom) had been detected in the Moawhanga River (dead spores) and was present in the Moawhanga Lake and other central North Island lakes. Testing of reservoirs and small lakes downstream in the

Rangitikei catchment would occur in conjunction with Horizons Regional Council.

Council acknowledged the efforts of staff to complete the amount of work during the summer sampling period and the professional systematic approach to sampling and reporting.

It was then moved to

***Receive the Rangitikei River Trout Fishery Management Report June 2018.***

**Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter**

Carried

**14. River Control Fishery Report**

Dr Kavermann provided a brief overview of the information in the report ***Project Report 1113 – River Control Fishery Assessment*** (May 2018) by Dr Kavermann. It was noted that the trends in the Hutt River and observations of large numbers of fish feeding following small scale disturbance of river works in the Hutt River.

It was then moved to

***Receive the River Control Fishery Report May 2018.***

**Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter**

Carried

**15. Policy Review - Compliance Processing**

Dr Kavermann provided an overview of the memo ***Managing Offences and Prosecution Procedures under the Conservation and Wildlife Acts in the Wellington Fish & Game region*** (June 2018). He outlined the potential procedures and circumstances for offering diversion and also circumstances where prosecution is the preferred alternative.

It was then moved that

***Council support the options of diversion and prosecution as outlined in the memo Managing Offences and Prosecution Procedures under the Conservation and Wildlife Acts in the Wellington Fish & Game region.***

**Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter**

Carried

Discussion ensued on setting the policy for details of diversion. Councillor Francis did not support options of community service due to the practicalities of managing this, but Dr Kavermann noted that any reparation needed to be agreed and completed before an assigned court date. Further discussion ensued on the principles relating to monetary reparation with it agreed that funds be deposited into a separate Trust or transparent Dedicated Reserve.

It was then moved that

***A monetary reparation of five times the licence fee for game bird hunting infringements plus costs to service court processing, if diversion is offered.***

Andy Tannock/Dan Waechter

Carried

After further discussion it was moved that

***A monetary reparation of five times the licence fee for sports fishing infringements plus costs to service court processing, if diversion is offered.***

Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter

Carried

Discussion ensued on clarification when diversion would not be offered – specifically in cases of obstruction of rangers. The same criteria would apply as the previous reparation policy.

It was moved that

***Diversion would operate in a manner consistent with criteria outlined in the previous reparation policy***

Andrew Morris/Malcolm Francis

Carried

Chairman Cotsilinis took leave from the meeting at 5.25pm and Councillor Shortis was confirmed as acting Chairman for the remainder of the meeting. It was noted that as only six Councillors remained, recommendations would be made rather than formal resolutions.

**16. R3 Programme – Increasing Participations and Market Analysis**

Steve Doughty (NZ Council Marketing Consultant) provided an overview of the R3 programme – Recruitment, Retention, Re-Activation. He provided a background of reducing licence revenue [in part due to discounting approach for new categories] and reducing participation as a percentage of the population – although actual numbers of participants were fairly stable. He considered customer perceptions might not align with Fish & Game's current perceptions e.g. Adult Whole Season licence is viewed by Fish & Game as the premier licence but millennial cohort might not view it this way as they don't necessarily think or plan too far ahead. He outlined a current weakness in Fish & Game's understanding of our customers and motivations for buying, staying in or lapsing. He noted that current recruitment is strong at 30% but this was matched by 30% lapsing each year – which is large 'churn'. The best return of investment was highlighted as being retention of existing customers. He considered the seven year cycle of the National Angler Survey



was far too infrequent to get meaningful insight into reasons for lapsing or extent of churn. He did consider that the price of licence over the last 20 years was running above the CPI for the corresponding years. Some initial analyses in 2010 -2010 indicated that 52% of customers considered the licence value for money, but we don't fully understand motivations for lapsing as the new cheaper licence categories haven't materially stopped lapsing.

Mr Doughty noted that to be able to address lapsing customers through the marketing function, there must be an understanding of the customers. Focus should be on "selling the experience" (not the ticket). He provided an example of targeting a cohort of males ages 35-55 and the different approaches to young people that come into the pursuit through mentors and social support. He noted that marketing identifies what the customer needs and wants, and then you can target actions from the R3 programme.

Mr Doughty explained what is lacking nationally is co-ordination in the marketing and R3 infrastructure of Fish & Game. He considered the communications needs to go through a marketing filter to focus on anglers and hunters high level priorities. He confirmed some basic principles of marketing (4Ps) Product (experience), Price (value), Promotion (Targeting), and Placement (get to where they are not coming to us). He outlined how we can measure objectively outcomes and development of marketing plans to provide clear guidance and direction. He considered that communication actions are very important to ensure Fish & Game messaging is not splintered to achieve goals in a (marketing) strategy.

Councillor Tannock supported the three recommendations:

1. Agree the decline in participation needs to be stopped and reversed
2. Agree in principle to establish an R3 programme
3. Request a proposal for the next meeting setting out what a five-year R3 programme entails and the costs.

Further discussion confirmed that a marketing strategy needs to be defined with customer information and strategic direction defined with R3 programme supporting the achievement of outcomes. Other options for alternative revenue streams can be included as part of an overall marketing strategy.

The meeting adjourned at 6.00pm for dinner and reconvened at 6.30pm.

#### Potential Revenue Streams

Councillor Shortis noted that in the current environment Fish & Game needed to be careful in seeking additional exotic species as a sports fish or

game species as presence of exotic species were increasingly being questioned by nativists.

Councillor Scott considered other revenue streams might include fish out ponds, and promoting fishing for perch as a valued species. He also considered that there are core roles in Fish & Game activities that are science based but there could be more of a focus on the commercial activities. He thought initiatives that might have merit such as loyalty cards tend not to develop past basic concepts in Fish & Game. Various options were discussed for supporting engaging novice anglers and transitioning them into independent anglers in the long term. It was considered that recruitment must translate into retention and this included novices of any age. The value of put and take fisheries was noted from overseas examples where they provided a real service to urban angling populations.

Council thanked Mr Doughty for the work undertaken to-date and expressed a willingness to contribute to the R3 programme initiatives.

**17. Policy Review – Permits to Release Sports Fish**

Discussion ensued on the request to restock a pond with perch in the Manawatu catchment. Council considered any request would need to cover any costs of staff time and transport, that stock could potentially be gathered at a coarse angling competition, but must first there must be an assessment of perch potentially causing any additional effects - as a contingency should they escape from a given site.

It was agreed that Council would support a relocation to re-stock a pond at the landholder's own time and effort following provision of details of when and where.

**18. Policy Review – New Conflicts of Interest Model Standards for the State Services**

Deferred

**19. Summary of eDNA Project Progress**

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of progress made by Dr Canning and researchers at Massey University with field trial and implementation the next stage in investigation. It was noted that this type of research reflected well on Fish & Game and many positive comments were received following media reports. Council noted to send their appreciation of efforts to date to Dr Canning.

20. **Captive Reared Mallard**  
NZ Council considered the issue with most regions not supporting the widespread release of captive reared mallard in their region, but the issue is being considered further by NZ Council before re-engaging with regional Fish & Game Councils.
21. **Fish & Game Submission on Long Term Plan (LTP) for Regional Councils – Update**  
Mr Teal provided an overview of the LTP submissions made to the Horizons Regional Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council – with recommendations provided for:
1. Freshwater Quality
  2. Flood Control Operations
  3. Incorporating Wetlands into a Rural Landscape
  4. Biodiversity – Fish Management
  5. Water Wairarapa Funding
  6. Fish Habitat Management
  7. Funding Mix Alternatives
22. **Western Region Resource Consents GWRC - Update**  
Mr Teal gave a brief overview of recent outcomes made following meetings and discussions with GWRC including their agreement to get an independent review of the Code of Practice.
- Council expressed their thanks to Peter Wilson for his efforts to-date in achieving progress on the consent conditions.
23. **One Plan Implementation - Update**  
Mr Teal gave a brief overview of Horizons Regional Council efforts to establish sub-catchment zone committees. He had informed Horizons that Fish & Game would be providing a position paper which outlined expectations and outcomes of the process.
24. **Wairarapa Water Update**  
Councillor Shortis gave a brief summary of recent Wairarapa Water's media reports which are now clearly focusing on 'saving the town water supply' and providing surety of water for urban dwellers.
25. **Wairarapa Moana Update**  
Mr Teal provided a brief summary on the exotic fish PhD investigation and consideration be given to contacting MBIE to define the outcomes that the University of Waikato were expected to achieve with the project.

Mr Teal noted that the perch egg removal technique undertaken as 'research' at Matthews Lagoon had not been successful but the researcher had removed strings of eggs that were visible on semi-sheltered site.

26. **Mallard Research Project**

Mr Teal indicated that he had requested from the mallard research group a summary of the mallard research with potential direction of research moving forward. Some preliminary consideration had been given to defining information needs for research for other game species.

27. **Junior Angler Promotions**

Mr Teal summarised the outcomes of a meeting of those involved with the Fish in Schools programme held prior to the Council meeting. He confirmed eight schools were up and running, and confirmed five other units had been ordered but were experiencing delays as they were being shipped from overseas with no stock available in NZ. Councillor Waechter confirmed the production of tank backing poster and tank cover (purpose designed). Council thanked Councillor Waechter for his efforts in progressing these items for all of the education units.

The historical hatchery site at Masterton as an education / research unit was still being progressed with specific proposals now being required to enable formal consideration by all parties. Discussion confirmed that the project needed to be financially viable and confirmed that there could be considerable benefits in garnering positive public awareness to get the facility being used.

28. **Wetlands Project Proposal**

Councillor Scott presented a paper that included information presented in the media as to how landholders could incorporate wetlands into their properties. It was also encouraging that other industry partners may be interested in achieving the same outcomes as Fish & Game and bodes well for possible collaborations in the future.

29. **Access Issues**

Mr Teal briefly outlined issues at:

- **Otaki River Mouth** –additional signage was erected at the request of local residents of informing hunting was being undertaken in area, but unlikely to satisfy those opposed to hunting per se.
- **Pukepuke Lagoon** – met with two iwi groups who have settlements at the site
- **Lake Koitiata** – met with iwi hapu representative who are currently formalising transfer of land.

- **Forest Blocks** – possible requirements for public liability insurance in future
- **Mycoplasma bovis** – possible issue for access for hunters and anglers to be aware of and how to interact with landholders in a compliant and respectful manner. A national response was request by NZ Council Communications Manager – pending.

**30. Management Report 16 March – 31 May 2018**

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of key project work streams undertaken by staff. Council reiterated their appreciation of the efforts made by staff in completing the work programme.

Discussion ensued on potential effects of logging in the Pakuratahi Catchment with 43 ha of land consented (PF Olsen) to be logged between June and December. It was requested to see if consent had been granted and if so with what conditions and are there any effects of sedimentation being actively monitored.

Discussion was briefly held on the progression of the consultation by the Whaitua Committee for Ruamahanga catchment. It was noted that there was a surprise response to 3-4 recommendations from the farming community, especially on irrigation takes. There were some positive aspirational outcomes sought by the Whaitua Committee but may remain conceptual due to organisational inertia and level of change required in current practice - eg removal of GWRC bulldozers from the river control sites.

It was agreed to receive the management report for 16 March to 31 May 2018.

**31. Fish & Game Licence Sales**

Mr Teal referred to the summary in the project report documents noting that licence sales for fish were now similar to previous year's sales, but Game licence sales were down about 70 LEQs.

**32. Expenditure Report**

After brief discussion on the Income and Expenditure Summary Report, Mr Teal explained the variances of budget compared to actual – mainly due to undertaking intensive project works in the Upper Rangitikei area for sampling. Councillor Scott noted the sources and applications of funds section and assisted in explanation of the GST components.

It was agreed to receive the Expenditure Report for 30 April 2018 and Financial Transactions for March and April 2018

**33. Contribution Awards**

It was agreed that Council would request and encourage clubs to make a written submission on nominations that could be considered by Council.

**34. Correspondence and Media**

There was brief discussion on media and correspondence, including the submission made by NZ Fish & Game Council on the guides licence proposal.

**35. General Business**

Brief discussion ensued on the following topics:

- Fish in Schools;
- Take a kid fishing v Take an adult fishing
- Good farming practice

There being no further business the meeting was concluded at 8.50pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Coachman Hotel, 140 Fitzherbert Ave, Palmerston North, Tuesday 21 August 2018 at 3.00pm.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_