

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON
TUESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2018 AT 3.00PM AT UPPER HUTT COSMOPOLITAN CLUB, 11
LOGAN STREET, UPPER HUTT**

1. Present:

Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Malcolm Francis, Paul Shortis, Marc Flaws, Dan Waechter, Andrew Morris, Don Scott, Jim Cook, Andy Tannock, Brad Johnson.

2. In Attendance:

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Dr Matt Kavermann,
Licenceholders: Richard Moore (from 5:30pm)

3. Apologies:

Councillors Eric Neumann, Chris O'Meara, Simon Muckley
Staff: Peter Wilson, Hamish Carnachan, Dr Adam Canning

It was then moved that:

the apologies be accepted.

Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter

Carried

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 21 August 2018

After a brief discussion it was moved that:

***the Minutes of the Meeting of Wellington Fish & Game Council of 21
August 2018 be approved as a true and correct record of the
proceedings of that meeting.***

Jim Cook/Dan Waechter

Carried

6. Matters Arising

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the communications sent to NZ Council relating to a review of fish licence categories, wider strategy of the Fish & Game NZ magazine given its scaling back, support for the independent review on hatchery operations and stocking policy, concerns about the Freshwater Indigenous Fish Bill, and concerns regarding the licence setting process.

7. NZ Council Business – Meeting 21 September 2018

Councillor Morris confirmed that NZ Fish & Game Council had considered the letter from Wellington Fish & Game Council relating to licence fee setting process. He noted that he considered that North Canterbury and Otago Fish & Game Council appointees were likely to push back any considerations for change due to their high numbers of licence sales from their regional Fish & Game Councils. Councillor Francis considered that the principle was for Fish & Game Councils to sell licences to the resource for an opportunity and therefore the budgeting should reflect that. Councillor Morris noted that some Councils such as North Canterbury were exhibiting the principle of overspend vs income.

It was generally agreed that the minutes of the meeting of NZ Fish & Game Council for 21 September 2018 were too terse and did not provide enough information to enable transparency. Councillor Francis cited the example of the uncertainty as to the decision making process to scale down the production of commercial issues of the Fish & Game NZ magazine – with the appearance of rubberstamping a decision already made. The recording of the decision making process by the NZ Council should provide some guidance as to the information used to make the decision and what direction was given to the Chief Executive to implement the decision.

Councillor Morris noted that while the Fish & Game NZ magazine issue appeared to be important for the Wellington region, other regions had different subjects of interest. Chairman Cotsilinis considered the recording of the decision making should reflect the principal driver of change and information used to make decisions (e.g. NZ Council or Chief Executive of NZ Council). Councillor Johnson noted that for some of these decisions wider consultation is most likely required, if not desirable.

Councillor Morris noted that the R3 Programme is being trialled in four regions, including Wellington region. Councillor Tannock supported this approach, in that if it was seen as successful in one third of regions, it would be inevitable that the rest of the regions would follow.

Councillor Morris confirmed that the independent review of hatchery operations and stocking policy by Cawthron Institute was distributed and the Salmon Working Party was considering its implications. Councillor Johnson confirmed that if the scientific advice considered practices or strategies flawed or financially the strategy does not stack up, then the Fish & Game Council is not fulfilling its role under the Conservation Act to enhance the Fish & Game resource. Councillor Morris noted that some regional Fish &

Game Councils were taking the view that they had a high degree of control and independence on how they spent the budget.
Dr Kavermann and Councillor Scott arrived at 3.40pm.

Councillor Shortis further considered that NZ Council could not allow continued funding in a region if it was scientifically flawed and demonstrably over budget. Chairman Cotsilinis confirmed that there was an expectation that Wellington Fish & Game Council's view on this issued would be emphasised in discussions at NZ Council.

Councillor Morris noted that there would be a meeting of all chairs and NZ Council in February in Wellington.

Councillor Morris noted there were potential changes to the NZ Council meeting schedule to better accommodate the budgeting process – principally the April budget meeting and June licence fee recommendation meeting.

Councillor Morris noted that NZ Council had received the remuneration audit paper and a two year time frame for consideration and action was anticipated. Councillor Shortis cautioned the long time frame for this process given the potential effect on staff morale. Councillor Francis considered that establishing a fair pay as a good employer should be a priority and a two year time line should be reduced significantly. Chairman Cotsilinis considered that further comment should be presented at the next NZ Council meeting expressing those views.

Councillor Flaws noted that the general public liability insurance option for all anglers and hunters did not appear to be discussed or decision made and Councillor Morris undertook to bring up this topic at the next NZ Council meeting.

After brief further discussion it was moved that

The report by Councillor Morris on the NZ Fish & Game Council meeting held on 21 September 2018 be received.

Malcolm Francis/Marc Flaws

Carried

8. Public Participation

There were no particular issues brought to the attention of Council to be discussed at the open public session.

9. Health & Safety Update

Mr Teal provided an overview of the Health & Safety reporting. Dr Kavermann noted that following a request from an honorary ranger that he would make an EPLB (personal locator beacon) available to them on request (in reasonable circumstances). It was noted that the manual was now operational (not 'draft' status) that continued to be adapted and updated. It was further noted that First Aid certification for all staff remained a priority.

It was then moved that

The Health & Safety Report for August and September be received

Dan Waechter/Jim Cook

Carried

10. 2018/19 Meeting Timetable

Discussion ensued on the draft meeting timetable that had been developed with specific milestones and deadlines in mind that were similar to previous years' dates. It was agreed that the draft timetable was acceptable but could be subject to agenda change such as budget setting in February.

11. One Plan Implementation Update

Mr Teal provided an overview of what Horizons Regional Council are publicly indicating to stakeholders on potential plan changes through their public meetings and letter to stakeholders including an initial focus on Plan Change 2 the nitrogen leaching table (Table 14.2), and potentially indicating that further plan changes may be required to resolve other implementation issues. It is intended that Fish & Game, EDS, and Horizons will meet to discuss both the Table 14.2 review and additional consenting pathways in October using independent Minister appointed facilitators.

Councillor Shortis noted that claims by Horizons Regional Council about water quality need to be backed up by data and robust interpretation of trends to retain credibility. He sought clarification that any independent review should provide guidance on what is proposed – and takes into account the original principles of an over-allocation of nutrients into waterways and how to address the issue.

It was then moved

To receive the report on the One Plan Implementation Project

Jim Cook/Andrew Morris

Carried

12. Freshwater Indigenous Fish Bill

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the Freshwater Indigenous Fish Bill and some possible scenarios that have been suggested from legal interpretations. It was agreed to make a submission on behalf of Wellington Fish & Game Council and that this submission be made available to clubs on request if

they required guidance on submission to the Bill to the Select Committee (closing date 25 October 2018). It was agreed that the submission should agree with the concepts and principles of protecting habitat but clearly point out where points of legal leverage might establish constraints to fish and game activities in the future.

13. Draft Game Harvest Conditions – Preliminary Discussion

Dr Kavermann provided an outline of the data used to make decisions and focused on the summary for each species. Councillor Tannock noted that the conservative approach undertaken by Council in recent years for setting regulations for mallard ducks had most likely contributed to the improved population numbers on the western side of the ranges. He further advocated for consideration of a ten bird limit even if only for opening weekend – given another good breeding season and lack of major floods at key periods of breeding season. Chairman Cotsilinis noted that scenarios for different daily bag limits could be developed and considered at the December meeting when game regulations are recommended. The potential season conditions for paradise shelduck, black swan were discussed, noting that these would essentially be determined following the January trend counts. It was confirmed that the season conditions for shoveler and pukeko were still appropriate given the monitoring data to hand.

14. Policy Review – Hatchery Operation and Stocking Policy

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of feedback given to NZ Council and noted that North Canterbury Fish & Game Council were seeking to respond to certain points in the report. It was questioned whether the NZ Council's sanctioned Salmon Committee was following sound scientific advice in developing policy for NZ Council and recommendations for timetables for actions. There was considerable discussion on merits and negative consequences of releasing fish including trout farming practices and the economic viability of trout farming and commercialisation of fishing.

15. Project Reports

Chairman Cotsilinis expressed his gratitude to staff for the outstanding quality and effort to produce the project reports in such a professional and comprehensive manner. These comments were universally endorsed by Council. Discussion ensued on how best to get this information out to clubs and licenceholders to enable keen anglers and hunters to see what work is undertaken on their behalf to manage the resource in their interests. It was agreed to go through each project report by focusing on key outcomes and provide an opportunity for questions and comments, and receive all reports en masse.

Councillor Shortis left the meeting at 5:30pm and Richard Moore arrived at 5:30pm.

Project Report 1111	Sports Fish Population Monitoring	<i>Councillor Francis questioned about what was being done to investigate the weir fish ladder on the Waikanae River, and how to protect and improve the Waikanae and Ohau rivers</i>
Project Report 1111a Project Report 1112	Trout Spawning Surveys Rangitikei Trout Fishery Management	<i>(report previously received by Council on 12 June 2018). Alternative sample analyses site being sought. DoC concession to land – request for fees to be waived</i>
Project Report 1113	River Control Fishery Assessment	<i>(report previously received by Council on 12 June 2018). Acknowledge the assistance of volunteers/</i>
Project Report 1114 Project Report 1114A	Game Bird Population Assessment Banding Report	<i>Site selection suggestions made for Boggy Pond/Bidwells for Wairarapa sites</i>
Project Report 1121 Project 1124a	National Hunter Harvest Survey Regional Hunter Surveys Opinions Hunter Activity Surveys: Parangarahu lakes, Baring Head, Otaki River Mouth, Waiterere Forest, Tangimoana Forest, Pukepuke Lagoon	<i>to be completed</i>
Project 1181 Project 1114B – NZ Shoveler Project 1211 Project 1211A	Game Bird Dispersal NZ Shoveler NZ wide report RMA Advocacy RMA Advocacy – Senior Environmental Planners Report	
Project 1313	Hunter Access Permits - Lake Wairarapa/ Wainuimota Permits	
Project Communications	Project 1331 Newsletter Project 1341 Communications to Clients Project 1441 Public Awareness Project 1443 Promotions	
Project 1351 Project 1354	Hunter Training – Lake Omanu Junior Angling	<i>Potential for reservoir fisheries under controlled conditions with easy access</i>
Project 1521/1531	Compliance and Ranger Management	<i>Acknowledge the commitment of honorary rangers</i>
Project Fish Licence Sales		

Project Game Licence
Sales
Project 1621 Licence
Agents Report
Occupational Safety and
Health Annual Report

It was moved that

The project reports for the financial year 2017/2018 be received

Dan Waechter/ Jim Cook

Carried

Council reiterated their previous comments in thanking and acknowledging staff for their outstanding efforts and dedication.

16. Merit Awards for Recognition of Contributions to Fish & Game

Brad Johnson :

Chairman Cotsilinis presented Brad Johnson with a merit award for his outstanding contribution to governance in the Wellington Fish & Game region. It was acknowledged that he was not standing for another term this election, but his insightful and astute assessment of the issues that affected hunters and anglers would be missed and was highly valued.

[Acclamation]

Richard Moore :

Chairman Cotsilinis presented Richard Moore with a merit award for his outstanding contribution to governance in the Wellington Fish & Game region. It was acknowledged that Richard had provided excellent representation of anglers, and coarse anglers in particular, and had made a great contribution as Wellington's appointee to NZ Fish & Game Council a few years ago.

[Acclamation]

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15pm and reconvened at 7:05pm.

17. Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the three existing Game Preserves that had indicated a continuation of operation. A further application by Boomrock noted that he had applied to the Department of Conservation for a permit to release 1000 birds (pheasants) and if he received this then an agreement with Wellington Fish & Game Council to establish a special conditions should be progressed.

18. Western River Resource Consent Applications

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the meetings with Greater Wellington Regional Council noting that they had included a Natural Character Index (NCI)/Habitat Quality Index (HQI) which is significant in measuring potential changes in habitat due to works undertaken. There are further mediation prehearing meetings scheduled for 24 October which may settle most outstanding issues for the Wainuiomata and Hutt Rivers.

19. Wairarapa Water Irrigation Project Update

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the current funding arrangements at GWRC and District Councils and their interaction with a private company funded by water users (irrigation interests). It was agreed to seek clarification on the principal focus of the project is – whether it is now security of water supply for urban use with irrigation being a key funding source. Clarification would also be sought on who owned and was using the intellectual property of publicly funded investigations.

It was agreed to

Receive the report on the Wairarapa Water Irrigation Project

Jim Cook/Don Scott

Carried

20. Lake Wairarapa Update

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of issues: the Treaty Settlement involving Kahungunu has stalled due to two sub-iwi groups disputing the mandated negotiators. This has not stalled the preparation by the regional council and DoC for the formation of a proposed Statutory Reserve Board with a formal and detailed communications strategy.

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of a permit application to remove sports fish for sampling on several waterbodies in the Wellington region. Council considered a draft permit ensuring that it does not confer access permissions, that the methods are fit for purpose. Council considered Mr Perrie's response to the draft and confirmed a permit that protected sports fish populations.

It was moved that

The report on issues at Lake Wairarapa be received

Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis

Carried

21. Mallard Project Update

Mr Teal noted the mallard project application made by the principal researchers to further develop work on brood habitat selection and use had been funded by NZ Fish & Game Council.

22. Junior/ Novice Participation

Otaki Pond:

Mr Teal and Dr Kavermann provided an update of the potential site for a fish out pond at with work being actively established to contour a fish out pond/canal at the gravel extraction lake in Otaki. Two freshwater angling clubs are planning to be involved in progressing an event in mid February as part of a summer activity programme promoted by GWRC.

Fish in Schools:

Discussion ensued on the potential for extra participants in Fish in Schools next year and also linking in nearby waterbody monitoring by the school students.

Fish Out Ponds:

Otaraua, Waikanae - many submissions made actively supporting a fish out pond at the irrigation pond site in the consultation phase of the reserve development plan to the site. Concern was expressed at the lack of transparency in the process undertaken by Kapiti Coast District Council and the overriding veto opportunities available when discussing all options at an iwi workshop prior to putting recommendations to their full Council.

23. Fish & Game R3 Marketing Update

Mr Teal briefly outlined the meetings with the NZ Fish & Game Council R3 Co-ordinator and intentions for identifying current work streams and linking them to the R3 principles prior to further refinement.

The Children's Fish Out Day project was discussed in terms of R3 principles and how to leverage further active involvement in fishing after the event. Dr Kavermann provided an overview that the Hokowhitu Lagoon Fish Out Day could focus on a "family fish out weekend" with some children participating in the netted off area, with further opportunity available outside of this (with extra fish but lower density). The next Manawatu Freshwater Anglers Club will discuss options for leveraging options and how children can interact with guides. It is intended that there might be a 'have a go' option in the wider fishing area and publicise these opportunities using email addresses of the parents. Councillor Scott indicated a willingness of the Manawatu FW Anglers club to follow up after the event with fishing tuition on site in the afternoon for a few weeks, and a potential for a river excursion to those that express enthusiasm. Councillor Morris noted that there were several

children boarding at Palmerston North Boys High School that are likely potential cohort of keen anglers.

Mr Teal outlined the consideration of a project promoting fishing on the Hutt River, linking in with local sports goods retailers and expert anglers providing demonstrations on site, assisted by the Hutt Valley Anglers Club.

24. Access Issues

Mr Teal briefly outlined issues at:

- **Otaki River Mouth** – GWRC were considering the decision making criteria and process which will allow those opposed to hunting to leverage responses.
- **Pukepuke Lagoon** – iwi groups who have settlements at the site are currently considering how hunting fits into their mahinga kai principles. Status quo at present.
- **Forest Blocks** – possible requirements for public liability insurance in future
- **Biosecurity: Mycoplasma bovis / Sheep Measles** – possible issue for access for hunters and anglers to be aware of and how to interact with landholders in a compliant and respectful manner. Ovis (responsible for sheep measles publicity) were requesting interaction with Fish & Game to provide publicity at low or no cost.

25. Management Report 1 August to 30 September 2018

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of key project work streams undertaken by staff. Mr Teal noted that he had concerns on the transparency of the process to determine the possibility of a fish out pond at the irrigation pond at Otara Reserve.

Council acknowledged the diligent work undertaken by Dr Kavermann to process the alleged offences via a diversion process.

It was then moved that

The Management Report for the period 1 August – 30 September 2018 be received.

Jim Cook/Andrew Morris

Carried

26. 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 slightly.

It was moved that

The report on Fish Licence and Game Licence Sales to 31 August 2018 be received

Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter

Carried

27. Expenditure Report

After brief discussion it was moved

That the Expenditure Report to 31 August 2018 and Financial Transactions for July and August be received

Don Scott/Dan Waechter

Carried

28. Correspondence

Correspondence and media items were briefly discussed.

29. General Business

Councillor Francis noted that there was disappointment expressed by fishing club members regarding the cessation of commercial issues of the Fish & Game NZ magazine. There appeared to be little or no effort to investigate why anglers were not buying the magazine from news-stores or subscription. He considered there remained an important function of maintaining messaging in the content to the wider public. He thought that the public awareness efforts in mainstream media focused on negative information which had been interpreted by some as harassing farmers. He further considered that the money saved from the cessation of the commercial issues should be used in surveying anglers/customers to determine what they want to read – eg Fly Life (an Australian magazine) appeals to many anglers. He considered that NZ Council had done an injustice to anglers/customers to not provide an opportunity to find out what subject material they wanted to read. He wanted to see an outcome where a suggestion is made to NZ Council to undertake a formal survey to help determine subject content. Councillor Morris noted that magazines with content that focused on a hobby were all struggling to survive financially and that was confirmed for the Fish & Game NZ magazine with a \$80,000 loss.

After further discussion it was moved that

Wellington Council write a letter to NZ Council to establish whether a survey had been undertaken to ascertain content for the Fish & Game NZ magazine and suggest one be undertaken to assist effective communications to licence holders with the remaining special issues

Malcolm Francis/ Don Scott

Carried

There being no further business the meeting was concluded at 8.30pm.

Next Meeting to be held: RSA Club Wairarapa, 20 Essex Street, Masterton,
Tuesday 4 December 2018 at 3.00pm.

Chairman _____ Date _____