

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 3.00PM AT HOTEL COACHMAN, 140 FITZHERBERT AVENUE, PALMERSTON NORTH.

1. **Present:**

Chairman Paul Dewar; Councillors Malcolm Francis, Andrew McGregor, Jennifer Yanko, Colin Shore, Steve Brown, Prof. Stephen Haslett, Aaron Passey, Jim Cook, John Hancock, Richard McIntyre.

In Attendance:

Fish and Game Staff: Phil Teal

Licenceholders: None

Public: Lee Cook (part)

Welcome and Confirmation of Agenda

Chairman Dewar opened the meeting and extended a welcome to all councillors for the first meeting of the year.

2. **Apologies:**

Apologies were received from

Councillors Don Scott, Aaron Passey (for lateness), Richard McIntyre (for lateness).

Staff: Hamish Carnachan, Dr Matt Kavermann, Ami Coughlan.

Licenceholders: Paul Shortis

It was moved

that apologies be accepted

Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis

Carried

3. **Conflict of Interest**

The Conflicts of Interest Register was reviewed, and discussed additional conflicts were noted specific to the agenda. There were no further additions required to the Conflict of Interest register.

Mr Teal confirmed that the Conflict-of-Interest register was updated accordingly from the previous meeting, and Conflict of Interest Management Plan was also updated with the new conflicts of interest that were identified and how Council intended to deal with managing a conflict.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting of 13 December 2022:

After brief discussion it was moved that

the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 13 December 2022 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Malcolm Francis/Jim Cook

Carried

5. Matters Arising:

Councillor Cook sought clarification as to when the next meeting between Taranaki and Wellington Fish and Game Councils would take place – with it clarified that progress of the initial core group meeting would be discussed later in the agenda.

Mr Teal noted that Councillor Haslett had been formally appointed as Wellington Fish and Game Council’s appointee to the NZ Council.

Mr Teal confirmed that communications had been sent to standholders regarding the Treaty Settlement legislative updates for Lake Wairarapa, and that it was anticipated further appropriate updates would be made in due course and the implementation process progresses.

6. New Zealand Fish and Game Council Business

Chairman Dewar deferred specific discussion on additional insights about the NZ Council meeting held on 25 and 26 November 2022 until Councillor McIntyre was present – acknowledging that the minutes from that meeting had been distributed and a brief overview of the outcomes had been provided by Corina Jordan (NZ Council Chief Executive) at the previous meeting.

Councillor Haslett confirmed that he had attended a NZ Council zoom meeting outlining the proposed NZ Council approach to the Natural and Built Environment Bill currently being considered by the Environment Select Committee (submissions closed on 5 February 2023 but extensions until 17 February 2023 would be granted if sought). Councillor Haslett provided a brief overview of the strategy of the submission and outlined the risk of the Bill in its current form being used to open up for development proposals, and potential safeguards provided.

Councillor Passey arrived at the meeting at 3:15pm.

7. Progress on Implementing the Ministerial Review

Chairman Dewar noted the topics for discussion:

A. Update on progress and status of Implementation Steering Group (ISG)

With DOC essentially withdrawing staff and financial resources from the ISG, and apparent lack of urgency by the Minister to implement changes – it has been left to Fish and Game Councils to progress various aspects of the Ministerial Review’s recommendations.

B. Update of meeting of regional Chairs

Chairman Dewar noted that there was an intent to have more regular (at least monthly) informal zoom meetings of regional Chairs – and that most regions had expressed willingness in progressing those recommendations from the ministerial review that did not require legislative changes. This included items such as requesting NZ Council to coordinate and provide governance training modules for regions. Chairman Dewar noted that there was a face-to-face governors meeting scheduled in Wellington on 11 February 2023 where several issues relating to addressing the Ministerial Review would be discussed.

Discussion ensued that most regions were keen to keep momentum going on a number of the recommendations – but there remained some regions that have retrenched into a “Business as Usual” approach. Council questioned as to how some regions still perceived that they were somehow in control of decisions to amalgamate or not with adjoining regions – with their focus on whether any changes benefitted individual regions’ funding/reserve/asset management rather than organisational governance benefits.

Councillor Francis noted that any continued indecision by regional Fish and Game councils to progress the ministerial recommendations would eventually have consequences detrimental to the licence holder. Councillor Brown sought clarification that NZ Council did not have powers to implement any changes – but were legitimately required to coordinate as appropriate. Chairman Dewar used the example of coordinating a governance training module for all regions as the type of role that NZ Council was expected to carry out.

Councillor McGregor sought insight as to whether inertia for change was being driven by councillor views or by staff in other regions – with examples of both provided (and combination of both) but some were clearly driven by Councils. Councillor Haslett questioned the current governance configuration compared to what was recommended to the Minister.

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After further discussion it was moved that

***Wellington Fish and Game Council uptake to governance
training module co-ordinated by NZ Council***

Malcolm Francis/Aaron Passey

Carried

It was further discussed that potentially a joint session between Taranaki and Wellington Fish and Game Councils (in Whanganui) to undertake this training as this could be more cost effective and potentially a good opportunity to discuss governance issues relating to any amalgamations.

C. Meeting With Adjoining Fish and Game Council Regions Working Group

Chairman Dewar confirmed that there had been an initial zoom meeting with a working group – comprising the Chairs, supporting councillor and management from each region. Some of the operational logistics were discussed, and there was a positive willingness to work through a process of amalgamation.

The initial process will focus on operational similarities and differences and defining a potential pathway forward for operational efficiencies. This would involve defining what things worked well for each region, what things are different, and what changes could be considered e.g. preparation of agendas, accounting systems etc.

Councillor Hancock questioned whether Hawke's Bay region wanted to be part of that process, and it was indicated that Hawke's Bay Council had not publicly progressed a position/preference for progressing an amalgamation.

Chairman Dewar indicated that Taranaki and Wellington Fish and Game councils would continue with their processes regardless. Councillor Passey noted that if Hawke's Bay indicated that they wanted to be part of the lower North Island amalgamation then it would be a continued progression down the current Wellington/Taranaki pathway rather than resetting from start.

Councillor Francis noted that feedback from licence holders in angling clubs are becoming less interested in updates – mainly due to lack of communication to licence holders, and lack of tangible progress dragging on for so long, regarding implementing the recommendations from the Ministerial Review. Their focus had been on ensuring the best value of the licence fee for licence holders is being achieved, rather than the politics and negative attitudes to restructures by different regions which

Draft and Unconfirmed

is no longer of interest to them. Chairman Dewar confirmed that Wellington Fish and Game Council had been proactive in achieving the outcomes that those licence holders were seeking – by progressing amalgamations for the long-term benefit of the organisation and licence holders.

It was confirmed that part of the amalgamation process would be to look at how the recommendations pertaining to governance level issues would be addressed. Discussion ensued on how the co-ordination of the amalgamation could proceed, including final configurations of governance and representation – including the potential reduction in the numbers of governors to 8 or 9 over time.

Mr Teal presented a quick overview of PowerPoint presentation by Collier Isaac – a business consultant that was advising regional Fish and Game councils on issues to consider when undertaking an amalgamation. The purpose of the presentation was to confirm with Council that there was additional expert assistance to help direct the councils through an amalgamation process (rather than the detail per se). It was confirmed that the NZ Council allocation for Ministerial Review implementation would be covering the costs of this advice.

Councillor Haslett confirmed that he was still seeking a transparent and more detailed budget for the \$500,000 indicative budget allocation for Ministerial Review implementation – as this was a substantial amount of licence holders' money that needed to be effectively spent.

8. Public Forum.

Chairman Dewar provided an opportunity for public to present items to Council – there were none.

9. Health and Safety Reporting – December 2022 and January 2023

Mr Teal noted that COVID-19 infections were still active in the wider public and protocols/restrictions developed in Health and Safety Plans were still recommended.

Mr Teal confirmed that he had made the Health and Safety meetings of weekly frequency to deal with a dynamic situation, and also provide an opportunity for more regular health and safety discussions/updates.

It was moved that

Council receives the Health and Safety Report for December 2022 and January 2023

Jennifer Yanko/Aaron Passey

Carried

10. Draft Season Conditions for the 2023 Game Season

The Draft Season Conditions for the 2023 Game Season developed by Dr Kavermann were presented with appropriate supporting documentation. This included an overview of the process and regulation setting policies that Wellington Fish and Game typically use (noting that they had been updated following the January 2023 trend counts for black swan and paradise shelduck). Mr Teal noted that the data from Nelson Marlborough regional counts were not available to be included as part of the Central NZ assessment yet, but it is confirmed that Wellington region has high numbers of black swan.

Councillor McGregor sought clarification on black swan regulations where a more liberal limit for the West Area was intended for opening weekend but also included the following Monday (i.e. 6 to 8 May 2023 inclusive). It was confirmed that this had already been presented as the Minister as the recommendation – but would have little effect on the total harvest or sustainability of the population.

After further discussion it was moved that

The draft regulations for the 2023 Game Notice presented to the Minister of Conservation in early February be confirmed without material changes required.

Malcolm Francis/Jim Cook

Carried

Chairman Dewar noted that during discussions at the regional Chairs informal forums that some regions do not adequately monitor changes in the black swan populations but set regulations conservatively to ensure a sustainable level (especially when considering native game bird species).

11. Legislative, Policy Review and Position Considerations

A. Overview of Policy review

Mr Teal provided an overview of the two streams of policy development occurring:

1. Contributing to corporate policy coordination by NZ Council – policy common to all regions
 - ***Risk and Audit Policy adopted by NZ Council***
 - ***Developing HR Policy***
2. Developing policy identified as requiring specific urgency in Wellington Region
 - updating ***Theft and Fraud Policy***

Draft and Unconfirmed

- developing ***Protected Disclosures Policy*** (a draft included in the agenda)
- Developing ***policies from templates***

It was agreed that there would be policy consideration at each Council meeting with the Protected Disclosures Policy to be considered formally at the next meeting. Mr Teal also noted that when considering the policy differences/similarities with Taranaki region that a national template would be considered when updating a policy – as most other regions were also wanting to update their operational and governance policies.

B. Overview of relevant legislation compliance

Mr Teal outlined the relevant legislation that is subject to compliance that was discussed during the annual financial and systems audit for 2021/2022 Financial Year:

1. Fish and Game Operational Activities (13 Acts)
2. Fish and Game as an Employer (15 Acts)
3. Fish and Game as a public body (7 Acts)
4. Fish and Game as an occupier of land (2 Acts), and
5. Fish and Game's Financial Reporting (6 Acts).

Mr Teal noted that it is likely that a more formal report will be required at year end (as an adjunct to the Annual Report) for the auditor that confirmed compliance with all of this legislation and noted any relevant updates during the year with amending legislation.

C. Natural and Built Environment Bill

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the submission process to the Environment Select Committee which replaces the Resource Management Act 1991. Submissions technically closed for public submissions on Sunday 5 February 2023 (with an opportunity for an extension until 17 February 2023 on request). There were currently considerable legal, technical, and planning evidence being prepared for the Select Committee – co-ordinated by NZ Council.

There was also a short email campaign that sought to encourage licence holders to submit on the Bill – in part using a broad template outlining the key issues. Councillor Brown considered that the submission form was too complicated and needed to be made simpler to engage with less computer savvy licence holders. Chairman Dewar noted that the processes used by the Select Committee and Government is not designed to make it easy.

Mr Teal also briefly outlined the strategy to highlight the social licence that Fish and Game needs to improve and have engaged in developing a public campaign on a longer time frame.

D. Mandatory Use on Non-Toxic Shot for 0.410 gauge shotgun

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of why this was being considered with urgency. The Minister of Conservation had faced a challenge in the High Court by a Southland hunter to justify why 0.410 shotguns are the only shotgun exempted from using non-toxic shot. Recently some ammunition had become available for 0.410 shotguns but is not readily available in New Zealand yet. The Department of Conservation felt that they did not have strong justification for continuing the exemption status. The High Court judicial review did not proceed as the proponent had since deceased – but the Department considered that the legal arguments were not compelling for continued exemption and an operational response was still warranted.

NZ Council staff considered that the Department would entertain a delay in removing the exemption for one year, but it was unlikely that full transition approach over several years would be acceptable - as had been the case with all other shotguns.

Councillor McGregor note that it would be at least a one-year transition required as the industry would need to order non-toxic shot for 0.410 gauge by May 2023 for the 2024 game season – and even if it was available through normal wholesale channels.

Councillor Brown considered that Fish and Game needed to continue to portray a clean green image for all activities – including the use of non-toxic shot for 0.410 shotgun. He also noted that further consideration could be given to the use of split shot for weighting lines and lures for freshwater fishing.

Councillor Yanko noted issues with copper toxicity used in a small amount of shot – but provided perspective in copper residues found in palm kernel extract spread as feed on farms.

After further discussion it was moved that

A transition to the use of non-toxic shot for 0.410 gauge shotguns for waterfowl hunting over water be made with at least a one year transition be recommended to NZ Council

Aaron Passey/Steve Brown

Carried

Council also sought confirmation that suitable ammunition would be available at a reasonable cost to hunters after this transition period concludes.

E. Firearms Fees Proposal – NZ Police

Mr Teal provided an overview of discussions within Fish and Game on the proposals by NZ Police to more substantively recover costs for issuing firearms licences – with increases realistically noted as potentially being increases from \$126.50 to \$625.60 and other potential requirements including online safety courses. A submission was made on the Arms Regulations Review by NZ Fish and Game – co-ordinated by Anthony van Dorp (Eastern Region) and significant input from Dr Matt Kavermann.

12. Strategy Planning Discussion

Discussion ensued on the Draft Fish and Game Strategy document prepared by NZ Council after consultations with NZ Council governors and also regional Fish and Game Managers. While it was initially thought that this exercise would be repeated in each region with governors and staff, it was viewed that repeating the exercise was leading more to fine tuning rather than stepwise changes.

Councillor Francis noted that on page 8 an addition required was identifying Regional Councils as a key agency/administration body that influences ecosystem health in rivers and wetlands - as they have most influence on outcomes from implementing environmental rules. He provided examples of Otaki River workings, Waikanae fish ladder efficacy, and gravel infilling of pools within the river structure. Councillor Hancock noted that GWRC were now considering instream structures in rivers such as rock groynes rather than repeated workings of the river margins.

Mr Teal referred to some of the feedback to NZ Council on the three year strategy – including acknowledging a response to climate change, and how to engage on indigenous species management.

Councillor Hancock noted that it did not show how some of the technical evidence would be obtained. It was noted that many items would be identified and scoped and would be included as contestable fund applications in the budget considerations for 2023/2024 financial year and beyond.

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After further discussion it was agreed that

Council receive the draft Fish and Game Strategy document and support its general intent and strategic direction

Steve Brown/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

13. Sports Fish and Game Management Plan

Mr Teal confirmed the consultation phase of the Draft Sports Fish and Game Management Plan was ready to go but halted while amalgamation discussions were occurring.

Other workstreams were being considered for development of this or the next iteration of the Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plan:

A. Developing workshop for Iwi engagement plan for Wellington Iwi

Discussion focused on the scope of what was needed for the Council and staff in terms of effectively engaging with iwi (including engaging with the right people) – what should be covered and what external advice is given by providers.

Councillor Yanko considered that Wellington Council could start engaging at the Council level by allocating a particular time slot at Fish and Game meetings that provided opportunities for open dialogue. It was considered that there needed to be considerably more background work to ensure tikanga and protocols are respected. Councillor Francis that Fish and Game has a structured business process and that by engaging as part of normal business – there would need to be background work on what is acceptable as a formal welcome and open speaking rights. He considered that if Council is contemplating engaging with iwi then Fish and Game protocols might need to be done differently. This included different treatment of groupings – e.g. public vs iwi partnership groups.

Councillor McIntyre arrived at the meeting at 4.50pm.

Chairman Dewar considered it would be appropriate to seek help from an external provider. It was agreed that Council needed to know how to positively engage but needed skill development as to understanding how to undertake meaningful and appropriate engagement. There had been no education available for governors in the past, therefore the level of understanding and confidence needs to be developed.

Councillor Francis noted a corporate training session undertaken by GWRC/DOC/KCDC a few years ago that covered key aspects of post-colonial

history – Treaty of Waitangi expectations, effects of colonialism, and how to address partnerships in the modern era. Councillor McIntyre noted that any education for governors should focus on going beyond just understanding the history but be in a position to be able to develop a suitable and respectful process of engagement. Chairman Dewar concurred that Council needed guidance in developing such a process of engagement that provided respectful dialogue and understanding of positions, without causing cultural offence. An outcome might be to have two or three governors understanding how to engage on a high-level generic process (e.g. the ‘three house’ model – (1) Mana Whenua ‘House’, (2) Kawanatanga House, (3) Treaty House) with additional base level overview for all governors.

Councillor Brown indicated that he would make inquiries regarding potentially suitable providers.

B. Developing workshop for setting regulations

This has not progressed and may require a working group to scope issues and how the wider Council workshop will progress.

C. Strategy Workshop

Council confirmed that it had considered the draft NZ Fish and Game Strategy earlier in the meeting and did not require a specific workshop to further consider the organisational strategy.

14. Licence Management Contract

Mr Teal provided an overview of the functioning of the Licence Management System operated by ESL.

A. Update on Licence Management System

Mr Teal provided an overview of the current contract – where ESL have provided a Minimum Viable Product (an operational system to collect licence fees and reconciliation) and is working adequately. Other functionalities and improvements had being refined (i.e. management of initial ‘bug fixes’) but NZ Council was currently negotiating with ESL moving from the ‘development’ phase to an ‘operational’ phase. This acknowledges that systems are never perfect but the provider must have progressed development to meet expectations defined in the original contract. This might mean that some additional improvements that were unforeseen when the contract was signed, will require additional funding to complete. This is entirely normal business practice in IT management.

There are two other functionalities that will be developed before August this year (in addition to initial contract) including sensitive fisheries management and booking systems.

B. Research Project on Licence Category Pricing Review

Mr Teal noted that this research project was scheduled to start by the end of 2022 – to investigate and provide objective advise on the licence categories introduced from 2015 and ensure they are still fit for purpose.

A research brief had not yet been developed by NZ Council as was expected – and this would allow potential research providers to indicate interest in the project and provide a formal project proposal.

Councillor Brown led a discussion on perceptions of his associates as to reasons why they hadn't bought a licence - with multiple reasons provided (often a limited time available). However, they were open to the concept of paying for a 'management fee' to ensure that when they decided to get back into fishing that the resource would be healthy on their return.

There is scope in the research project to potentially investigate changing the perceptions of 'licence fee' to a 'management fee' to incorporate managing the resource concept. This would involve whether it was possible or desirable for a change in mindset to one where the principal focus is the management of the fisheries, and the second focus is a fee to fish. He thought that even though those deemed a 'lapsed participant' and were not active in fishing, they still considered themselves an 'angler.' Councillor Brown considered this may change anglers' perceptions to be happier to keep fish (rather than catch and release).

Another concurrent concept that could be considered is the development of a 'trout stamp' for those that are not active in fishing. It was noted that several other concepts are currently being introduced to manage sensitive trout fisheries and pressures from non-resident angling.

Councillor Haslett confirmed that it essential to define the research briefs correctly at the outset and ensure the scope is currently defined.

Discussion ensued on other issues such as the value of Taupo Fishing Licence compared to a NZ wide Fish and Game licence (or combining into a whole of NZ licence) – with physical access to rivers becoming increasingly challenging for certain age groups (65+) which were also being given as a contributing factor to not buying a licence. Any research could look at the

Draft and Unconfirmed

perspectives of why people don't currently fish but want to contribute some way to the sustainable management of the fisheries.

Councillor Passey noted that some research should focus on game bird licence perceptions for hunters. In addition, there has also already been identified of promoting female licence holder participation and involvement.

15. **R3 / Marketing Update**

Mr. Teal provided an overview of the R3 marketing actions:

A. Marketing Update – Prior to Fish season and Early Season

- A brief summary of the actions undertaken by staff in terms of communications.
- Magazine articles completed for Game Magazine 2023
- Email to all previous season licence holders and lapsed participants from two years prior – prior to Christmas – 20 December 2022
- Email to all previous season licence holders and lapsed participants from two years prior – post Christmas break and prior to Wellington Anniversary Weekend - 18 January 2023
- Weekly Fishing Bulletin – timely information for anglers and to encourage activity
- Mapping information sent in newsletter distribution – with QR codes linking to update access information maps.

After further discussion it was moved that

The R3/Marketing Report for December 2022 and January 2023 be received

Malcolm Francis/Steve Brown

Carried

16. **Communications Update**

Mr. Teal provided a brief summary of key communications actions undertaken – including additional work that will result from the media campaign to maintain Fish and Game's social licence.

Councillor Yanko noted that there had been positive feedback posted on social media from Hunterville hunters regarding the transfer of mallards to the area from sites in urban areas where they were causing nuisance events.

17. Regional Plan Updates

Mr Teal provided an overview of regional planning processes in train:

A. Horizons RC – One Plan – Plan Change 2 Appeal Update

An update was provided on the PC2 Appeal - regarding risk matrix development and use of GMP (Good Management Practices)

Environment Court Mediation was conducted on 12 December 2022 with several further meetings being undertaken by expert farm managers, and planners to see how any proposed policy would be effectively implemented.

B. Horizons RC – Freshwater Futures Update

Mr Teal provided an update of Horizons Consultation and Community Engagement Process, and he confirmed that more effort is being placed on mana whenua consultation rather than wider community consultation. This is in part that Horizons' staff considered that they already know the list of community values already – but they haven't defined local interpretations of Te Mana o Te Wai. It was noted that no information has been publicly provided to give guidance of how the concept of Te Mana o te Wai will be implemented – with the consultation process being undertaken with Mana Whenua groups being used to refine a common advocacy position made from a base understanding.

Mr Teal noted that Horizons had not supplied Fish and Game with copies of public submissions to their initial phase of work to identify community values – as part of an OIA request they indicated a charge of up to \$1600 for provision of such – which is a disappointing transparency of process. A critique of the process and questionnaires will be requested in due course to ensure the process has been meaningful - as the questions can often lead to specific answers without allowing an alternate preferred view.

Mr Teal also noted that Horizons has engaged with recreational river users (including anglers) over summer to gauge usage and site coverage along catchments.

C. GWRC – Natural Resources Plan

Nothing to report

D. GWRC – proposed changes to Regional Policy Statement

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Mr Teal noted that Fish and Game had submitted on the proposed changes to the GWRC Regional Policy Statement. Further submissions were sought from the public as part of the formal consultation process.

After further brief discussion it was moved that

The report on active regional planning process cases be received.

Richard McIntyre Malcolm Francis

Carried

18. **Western Region Flood Protection Works Resource Consent Applications Update**

Mr Teal provided an overview of three major applications:

1. Otaki and Waikanae River Catchments – no progress
2. Hutt River – Climate Resilience Projects – COVID Shovel Ready projects

These projects should be completed and funding will cease or be retracted.

3. Hutt River – RIVER LINK project update

A substantial project intended to recontour the Hutt River for about two kilometres near Melling Bridge has been granted resource consents directly at the Environment Court. This work will include substantial work in the river, and be prolonged (over 2 years).

It is intended that Fish and Game will be involved in the specific monitoring of trout populations to ensure that trout spawning is not overly affected by works in the lower river, that might affect trout movements from the lower reaches to tributaries upstream used for trout spawning. Currently finalising contractual arrangements.

After brief discussion it was moved that

Council to receive the reports on the GWRC Western Rivers Global Consent and resource consent for Hutt RiverLink projects

Aaron Passey/Steve Brown

Carried

19. **Wairarapa Moana Update**

A. Treaty Settlement update

- Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki nui-a-Rua Claims Settlement Bill progressed now confirmed legislation
- Te Rohe o Rongokako Joint Redress Bill now confirmed legislation

Mr Teal confirmed that there was a meeting of the Wairarapa Moana Governance group on Friday 10 February 2023 – which should provide some

Draft and Unconfirmed

direction in the transfers of land and governance of Lake Wairarapa and surrounding areas.

B. Exotic Fish Management Plan Progress

Fish and Game provided comments on the draft Fisheries Management plan but it is anticipated that this will be discussed at the Wairarapa Moana Governance meeting on 10 February 2023.

C. Jobs for Nature Project Management – Wairarapa Moana Research Funding and Restoration Plan

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the budgeting and expenditure of the Jobs for Nature Project – Wairarapa Moana. It had been reported that nearly 30,000 trees had been planted on the margins of Lake Wairarapa – but survival rates have not yet been assessed.

D. Stand Allocation and Management

Ballots undertaken and hunters are being provided direct guidance for stand location and expectations. Paul Browne had acted as a liaison between hunters and Fish and Game – and this has been successful in avoiding ambiguity of site positioning and requirements/expectations of stand safety.

After brief discussion it was moved that

Council receive the report on Wairarapa Moana activities and management issues

Jim Cook/Andrew McGregor

Carried

20. Research Update

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of research projects and the NZ Fish and Game Research programme:

A. E-DNA Project

Massey University researchers have completed a manuscript outlining the protocols for sampling ready for field trials and use for sampling river water samples to sample environmental DNA (eDNA) and nuclearDNA for brown and rainbow trout in spawning streams. The E-DNA project which was essentially completed except for the submission of a journal paper.

B. Native Fish – Trout Interaction –

Ami Coughlan is presenting her findings at an international conference in February 2023. Two manuscripts are being prepared but anticipate the process to take several months until peer review completed and formal journal publishing.

C. Summary of NZ Fish and Game Council Co-ordinated Projects

Mr Teal presented a summary table of projects being undertaken to provide councillors with an idea of the scope and commitments of various research projects.

After brief discussion it was moved that

Council receive the research update report for January 2023

Malcolm Francis/Steve Brown

Carried

21. Licence Holder Engagement

Mr Teal provided an overview of various initiatives to engage with licence holders:

A. Junior Novice Fishing Days

- a. Otaki Site – Update of post event activity with fish still surviving and present at the site. Councillor Francis updated that the area had been landscaped and it was hoped that the area will develop into a healthy fishery over time.
- b. Hokowhitu Lagoon – Update of post event activity with around 450 fish dying in 8 weeks following event date
- c. Marton Reservoir – Promotion of fisheries is positively encouraged by the Rangitikei District Council
- d. Capital Trout Centre– Regular events continue to be successfully run.

B. Woman on The Fly Programme

Councillor Francis noted that Women on the Fly programme was a huge success event for women run by women – credit goes to Leigh Johnson and Ruth McKenzie for being the drivers of the project. Follow up surveys planned for this year to determine improvements and/or continuance of positive aspects of the programme.

After discussion it was moved that

The report on Licence Holder Engagement for December 2022 and January 2023 be received

Richard McIntyre/Malcolm Francis

Carried

22. Access issues update

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the continued hunting access for hunters at the Otaki River mouth for the 2023 Game Season.

No progress had been made on securing access to the New Zealand Defence Force land in the Upper Rangitikei / Otamateanui confluence landing spot.

23. Management Report 1 December 2022 – 31 January 2023

Mr. Teal highlighted to Council the current Wai 2200 Waitangi Tribunal claim that involved considerable areas on the western side of the region.

It was then moved that

Council receive the Management Report for period 1 December 2022 to 31 January 2023

Jim Cook/ Richard McIntyre

Carried

24. Fishing and Game Licence Sales

A. Fish Licence Sales for 2022/2023 Fishing Season

Mr Teal provided a brief summary of fish licence sales for the 2022/2023 Fishing Season being about 300 LEQs down compared to previous year. He referred to the cumulative licence sales graph which showed the previous two years were exceptional with high and early licence sales – but the sales pattern had reverted to the average prior to COVID. (down around 80 LEQs of pre covid). Discussion ensued on the potential effects of weather and subsequent swollen rivers for extended periods throughout the first part of the season.

B. Licence Forecast For 2023/24

Mr Teal also brought to Council's attention the 2023-2024 licensing forecast report prepared by Kate Thompson and Carmel Veitch on behalf of the Licence Working Party dated 26th of January 2023. The forecasting exercise was looking at how the COVID years were disruptors in the license sales (including initially positive for Wellington) but now it has return to sales approximately the previous average (from 2015-2019).

It was then moved

That the Fish Licence Sales Report for 2022/23 to 23 January 2023 be received

Aaron Passey/John Hancock

Carried

25. Expenditure Report to 31 October 2022 and Transaction for September/October 2022

Mr. Teal provided an overview of the Financial Expenditure papers noting that:

- Legal Advice on implications of Treaty Settlement Acts for Fish & Game management and interests – confirm unbudgeted from reserves.
- Legal Advice required on GWRC proposed Regional Policy Statement which affects Regional Planning processes

Draft and Unconfirmed

- Vehicle Replacements – received – delivery early 2023. Replaced vehicles will be sold through Turners Car Auction
- Reserves Forecast Provided for Information

It was then moved that

Council Receive and Accept the Expenditure Reports to 31 December 2022 and Financial Transactions for November and December 2022.

Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis

Carried

26. Correspondence and Media

A brief discussion was held on the Canada geese cull undertaken by local farmers from a helicopter and that large numbers of birds were not recovered. This has the potential to reflect on all waterfowl hunting perceptions to the public – even though Fish and Game and hunters were not involved.

It was moved to

Receive the correspondence and media items

Andrew McGregor/Malcolm Francis

Carried

27. Recognition of Contributions Awards

Mr Teal presented Councillor Shore a small memento recognising his diligent work on the banding programme for this and previous years – as well as other regular contributions over the years. He had indicated that he was moving to the South Island as principal residence but would still likely make regular contributions to Fish and Game management in the Wairarapa area.

Councillor McGregor noted that Hunting and Fishing was considering promoting the banding project by having a random pick of up to 10 band numbers with a prize offered for each band number returned. The principal purpose being to create a bit of hype and awareness of the banding programme – and hopefully increase the reporting rate of bands.

Lee Cook arrived at the meeting at 6.05pm.

28. Wellington Conservation Board – Report and Update

Council noted that the next Conservation Board meeting was scheduled to be held on the 10 February 2023. There had been no agenda provided.

A brief discussion ensued on the issues of the occasional presence of jetboats in Tararua Forest Park areas in high flow and timelines for reviewing Conservation Management Strategies that were being considered for review.

Draft and Unconfirmed

Further brief discussion confirmed Wellington Fish and Game's interpretation that there was a responsibility of the Conservation Board to provide direct liaison on issues - rather than relying on public forums in meetings as the place for dialogue.

29. General Business

Councillor Brown noted that there were potential issues on the Makuri River with regards to the river geomorphology (structure) in that some of the pools appeared to be filling up with gravel – potentially caused by deforestation or other contributing issues.

There being no further items of general business the meeting was closed at 6.15pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Meeting on Tuesday, 21 March 2023 at Nga Manu Nature Reserve Facilities, 74 Nga Manu Nature Reserve Rd, Waikanae at 3pm.

Chairman_____ Date_____