

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON
TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2017 AT 3.00PM AT UPPER HUTT COSMOPOLITAN CLUB, 11
LOGAN STREET, UPPER HUTT**

1. Present:

Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Dan Waechter, Marc Flaws, Jim Cook, Paul Shortis, Malcolm Francis, Chris O'Meara, Simon Muckley, Brad Johnson.

2. In Attendance:

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Matt Kavermann.

Licenceholders: Graeme McKenzie.

3. Apologies:

Councillors Eric Neumann, Andy Tannock, Don Scott, Andrew Morris.
Staff: Hamish Carnachan, Adam Canning, Peter Wilson.

It was then moved that:

the apologies be accepted.

Malcolm Francis/Marc Flaws

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 10 October 2017

After a brief discussion it was moved that:

***the Minutes of the Meeting of Wellington Fish & Game Council of 10
October 2017 be approved as a true and correct record of the
proceedings of that meeting.***

Jim Cook/Dan Waechter

Carried

6. Matters Arising

Mr Teal advised that the itinerary for the NZ Council field trip on 25 November 2017 around the Wellington Fish & Game region was successfully organised and completed. A presentation folder was developed for NZ F&G Councillors that provided a brief overview of the many issues facing the Wellington region. Wellington Fish & Game Councillors who attended part or all of the field trip commended staff for their efforts. Mr Teal noted that there were several Wellington Fish & Game councillors that attended part or

all of the event – which added to the personal commitment by Wellington region staff and Council.

Mr Teal confirmed that questions regarding hunters' perceptions of the value of public liability insurance and, if it was to be made a requirement, what they would consider reasonable, was included in the email hunter survey conducted in early December.

Mr Teal confirmed that Wellington Council's recommendations on the draft Code of Conduct information for fishing were sent to NZ Council.

7. NZ Council Business

In Councillor Morris's absence, Councillors Waechter, O'Meara, and Flaws provided a brief update of the NZ Council meeting held on 24 November 2017.

They confirmed that Conservation Minister Eugenie Sage had attended the meeting of which interactions were positive in content.

Discussion occurred on how the critique of resource management applications was submitted to the wider organisation to call upon funds from the regional legal fund using a common template and how these were assessed.

Resource Management applications submitted by regions were approved for Auckland/Waikato region to jointly defend (with DoC) allegations of loss of pasture productivity due to the operation of the Whangamarino Wetland weir. Otago region also confirmed they required funds for the Lindus River water quantity case which had not been resolved.

A summary had also been given on the Salmon Symposium organised by Central South Island and North Canterbury regions. It provided a very good focal point for discussions on salmon management in the South Island and potential opportunities for management actions to make catches more consistent. Dr Adam Canning attended the symposium for Wellington region.

After further brief discussion it was moved that

The summary report for the NZ Fish & Game Council meeting held on 24 November 2018 from Councillors Waechter, O'Meara, and Flaws be received.

Malcolm Francis/Chris O'Meara

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. There was nothing new to report. After further discussion it was moved that

The Health and Safety Report overview for October and November be received

Jim Cook/Marc Flaws

Carried

10. **Recommendations for Hunting Season Conditions for 2018 Game Season**

Dr Kavermann provided a brief overview of the information at hand regarding population trend counts referred to in the Project Report 1114 Game Bird Population Assessments and Project Report 1121 National Hunter Harvest Survey 2017.

Mallard Duck:

In addition to the transect count analyses, Dr Kavermann outlined information from previous email surveys that confirm most hunters (80%) would be satisfied with an 0-8 bird limit if a conservative approach was justified. A discussion then ensued on likely options to be considered: eight bird limit for eight week duration; ten bird limit for an eight week duration; and a split ten bird limit for opening weekend and eight limit for remainder of an eight week season.

It was then moved that

The hunting conditions to be recommended to the Minister of Conservation for mallard duck be an eight bird limit per day for an eight week season

Chris O'Meara/Jim Cook

Carried

Paradise Shelduck:

A recommendation would be confirmed in January after the aerial trend counts had been completed. It was confirmed that in addition to trend count information that changes in nuisance reporting would be taken into account via the formal complaints register.

Shoveler:

After consideration of the information from the national shoveler count it was moved that

The hunting conditions for NZ shoveler duck be recommended to be two birds per day for an eight week duration (in line with the waterfowl season)

Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara

Carried

Pukeko:

After consideration of the information from the pukeko transect count and noting that numbers were clumped and not evenly distributed, it was moved that

The hunting conditions for pukeko be recommended to be five birds per day for sixteen week duration (in line with the upland game season)

Strato Cotsilinis/Chris O'Meara

Carried

Black Swan:

A recommendation would be confirmed in January after the aerial trend counts had been completed. It is likely that the regulation setting policy would guide harvest conditions.

Bobwhite Quail:

After discussion it was confirmed that season conditions for bobwhite quail would remain unchanged from the previous season.

The hunting conditions for bobwhite quail be recommended to the Minister as No Limit but be restricted to Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions for sixteen week duration (in line with the upland game season)

Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara

Carried

California Quail:

After discussion it was confirmed that the season conditions for California quail would remain unchanged from the previous season. It was then moved that:

The hunting conditions for California quail be recommended be five (5) birds per day per hunter for a sixteen week duration (in line with the upland game season).

Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara

Carried

Cock Pheasant:

After discussion it was confirmed that the season conditions for cock pheasant remain unchanged from the previous season. It was then moved that:

The hunting conditions for cock pheasant be two (2) birds per person per day per hunter for a sixteen week duration (in line with the upland game season).

Chris O'Meara/Marc Flaws

Carried

Red Legged Partridge:

After discussion it was confirmed that the season conditions for red legged partridge remain unchanged from the previous season. It was then moved that:

The hunting conditions for red-legged partridge be one (1) bird per person per day per hunter for a sixteen week duration (in line with the upland game season) unless hunted on an upland game property with special conditions where there is no limit .

Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara

Carried

Discussion ensued on clauses within the game notice that pertained to all other game species would have a limit of one (1) in the region for the duration of the upland game season. Mr Teal clarified that this was a specific clause for Taranaki Fish & Game region and was considered only on a regional basis. Mr Teal was to confirm that none of the written advisories pertained to Wellington region.

It was confirmed that all other conditions would remain the same for the 2018 Game season.

11. Captive Reared Mallard

Council considered a memorandum *Release of Captive Reared Mallards* (undated but prepared for the NZ Fish & Game Council meeting in November 2017) developed by Robert Sowman (Policy and Planning Manager, NZ Fish & Game Council) and Andy Garrick (Manager, Eastern Region Fish & Game Council).

Chairman Cotsilinis provided an overview of the key discussion points contained in the memorandum and supporting documentation. Councillors discussed the merits of releasing ducks for additional numbers, the carrying capacity and limiting factors if due to habitat loss and environmental drivers, whether the focus would be on existing upland release sites for game preserves, and the role of Department of Conservation granting permits and protocols used.

Council then considered the recommendations on page 7 of the memorandum and the five questions relating to Fish & Game positions for drafting policy contained in section 3 of the memorandum:

- (1) Wellington Fish & Game does not support the releasing of captive reared mallard (CRM) as a tool to augment wild populations. Discussion focused on the principle of adding to an existing population that is limited by habitat and its potential effectiveness or ineffectiveness long term.
- (2) Wellington Fish & Game considered that, given the discussion points for natural carrying capacity in draft position 1 above, that using CRM as a tool for recovery from extreme environmental/harvest/disease events becomes irrelevant.
- (3) Wellington Fish & Game did not support the concept of using CRM as a basis for a 'put and take' operation at this stage. It was confirmed that if habitat continues to decrease then consideration could be given to determine what role 'put and take' operations will have to sustain hunting. With the current scenarios it was considered difficult to 'control' or isolate wild populations from going to release sites, and the rules would be ambiguous. Discussion also ensued on whether there had been realised improvements for the average hunter and habitat niches potentially filled by augmented releases.
- (4) Wellington Fish & Game did not support the development of commercial operations for mallard release and hunting purposes.
- (5) Wellington Fish & Game did not support the concept of allowing 'driven hunts'.

Further discussion occurred that reaffirmed that should Fish & Game decide to undertake this approach of CRM then it should be required to be on a non-commercial basis. It was further postulated that should ever be considered essential to consider such an approach then Fish & Game should be the principal driver to undertake.

Discussion ensued that if the Department of Conservation continue to issue permits (and do not delegate function to Fish & Game) then Fish & Game needed a clear position on the activities. Clarification would be sought (as a priority) from the Minister and Department as to why permits are being issued and who should be responsible for issuing permits for gamebirds in the future to ensure monitoring for consistency of conditions.

It was then moved that

A response be given to NZ Fish & Game Council by 1 March 2018 on the Wellington positions defined on the use of captive reared

mallards (CRM) as a management tool and positions on 'put and take' operations including the potential commercialisation of 'put and take' mallard operations.

Wellington Fish & Game Council would also seek clarification from the Department of Conservation as to how any permissions would be considered and conditions on issuance.

Chris O'Meara/ Brad Johnson

Carried

12. Briefing Paper to Incoming Minister

Mr Teal confirmed the briefing paper that had been provided by NZ Fish & Game Council to the incoming Minister of Conservation outlining key issues and positions for Fish & Game.

It was moved to

Receive the briefing paper to the Minister of Conservation for information

Dan Waechter/Chris O'Meara

Carried

13. Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions

Mr Teal noted that the adjoining neighbours of Rathmoy Game Preserve had a tacit agreement in principle for limited numbers to be released with specific enforceable conditions. Council considered that to indemnify Fish & Game from potential nuisance complaints that that Mr Grace must have a signed agreement from them to operate. Mr Teal explained that relationship difficulties had developed between the two parties due to past experiences on perceived lack of following up on agreement clauses.

It was agreed that

To progress a formal agreement with Fish & Game that Rathmoy Game Preserve be required to produce a letter from the adjoining neighbours indicating permissions including any mitigating conditions required

Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter

Carried

Mr Teal noted that Waituna West operator had recently requested to extend the boundary used to include part of the neighbouring property. Councillor O'Meara recounted original principles of not increasing the preserve boundary footprints that might 'lock up' sites on the fringes of game preserves – where currently 'normal' hunting conditions prevail. Councillors noted that while there were potentially merit in transferring some of the operations on a practical perspective, a more formal proposal would be expected in the future. It was then moved that

Waituna West boundaries for an operational Upland Game Property with Special Conditions be allowed for this request for one year and that a formal plan be submitted subsequent years

Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter

Carried

Councillor Cook did not vote due to potential conflict of interest.

It was confirmed that any future formal requests be made with written confirmation and that requests be confirmed with the operator and land.

Mr Teal also noted that Te Para Hut Game Preserve had confirmed its seasonal operational plan.

14. One Plan Implementation - Update

Mr Teal gave a brief overview that the regional council were considering partial Plan Changes to the regional plan. It was apparent that the Regional Council had commissioned some work by planners to provide advice on planning perspective, and also develop short and long term options for progressing the implementation issues for the Regional Council.

Council confirmed that a consistent and firm stance should be maintained. Mr Teal noted that planners from the Regional Council would be conferencing with Fish & Game's planning expert in early December.

It was then moved

That the update report on the One Plan implementation be received

Jim Cook/Dan Waechter

Carried

15. Wairarapa Water Update

Councillor Shortis gave a brief summary of recent Wairarapa Water's media outputs noting the continued strategy to promote 'environmental benefits' of flushing flows and social benefits in securing municipal supply. Currently Fish & Game were waiting to see how the new Government would view these issues, with the expectation that Water Wairarapa was preparing with further funding as they are not at completion of feasibility. It was anticipated that there would be a change in messaging focus: for drought issues, water supply, and environmental benefits.

It was then moved that

That the update report on the Wairarapa Water Project be received

Dan Waechter/Chris O'Meara

Carried

16. Wairarapa Moana Update

Mr Teal noted that there had been a recreational use survey conducted by Greater Wellington Regional Council (on behalf of Wairarapa Moana) which was slanted in its distribution and had not included waterfowl hunting as an activity – but the results had indicated duck hunting was an important “other activity” category.

Council discussed ways to develop enhanced relationships outside the Wairarapa Moana forum – as there were many views of the lake management that were similar to iwi. Councillor Shortis also indicated other opportunities to develop relationships with GWRC and DoC through assistance with data collection to understand movement of wader birds – such as a walking count planned in February.

Mr Teal confirmed that DoC and GWRC were classifying that the fish removal at Bartons Lagoon was a ‘control programme’ for introduced fish. It was also confirmed that no follow up counts for native fish species was being planned as part of the programme – removing any potential causative assertions made from data collection in the future. Council considered that if there was no meaningful outcome being monitoring from the “surveying” or “control” then DoC and GWRC should be considering the ethical principles of killing fish for perception value only. Mr Teal was requested to draft a letter with the intention of sending to DoC and GWRC expressing concern at the sportsfish removal without monitoring an effect.

Mr Teal confirmed that the project by DOC using an artificial substrate to preferentially select for perch spawning at Matthews Lagoon had been unsuccessful. It was noted that the DoC contractor had removed 5kg of perch eggs from the edge of the wetland and this was intended to be the basis of press release to promote the project. Councillor Francis noted that it was Fish & Game’s responsibility to advocate for all sports fish. If the research is good research and improves understanding then Fish & Game would support, but if the research is of no benefit or of poor quality then Fish & Game should request for the research to cease. It was also considered that there would likely to be other research priorities (that could be resourced) that would take precedence over species that have been present for decades.

Dr Kavermann noted that staff had been seeking clarification on what PhD student Alton Perrie’s research would entail, clarifying the research question(s), and how the research would be undertaken. Staff were reluctant to give a permit until Council could be confident in the justification (or reason) for the research – as the field of interest was currently considered too broad. Dr Kavermann outlined that the research was trying to establish

the characteristics of the fish community and potential effects on native fish communities, and potential effects on water quality changes that in turn might affect native fish fecundity. He further outlined that Mr Perrie was given a permit for a pilot study to enable progress in his studies. Dr Kavermann outlined the principles to progress was to undertake the pilot study (with permit issued with time bounds) for Wairarapa (four sites) to test methods and gain more confidence in security of outcomes.

After discussion it was agreed that

A permit be issued for a pilot study to prove techniques on a limited 25 fish sample on four sites in Lake Wairarapa.

Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara

Carried

It was then moved

That the report on the update to Lake Wairarapa management be received

Malcolm Francis /Chris O'Meara

Carried

17. Mallard Research Project

Mr Teal indicated that a mallard research meeting was held on 26 October 2017 that considered some direction for research in the next 3-5 years. It was still relying on completion of work by the PhD candidate as part of the overall research programme.

Dr Kavermann noted that he would be summarising the findings from the current mallard research work so it could be strategically communicated to hunters and socialised.

After discussion it was moved

To receive the update on the mallard research

Jim Cook/ Malcolm Francis

Carried

18. Junior Angler Participation – Fish Out Day – Palmerston North

Dr Kavermann gave a brief overview of the Children's Fish Out Day held at Hokowhitu Lagoon on 12 November 2017: noting the continued demands from young anglers, and also innovations such as the use of a 'virtual' hunting gallery that was well received. Council acknowledged the efforts of Dr Kavermann and the Manawatu Freshwater Anglers Club (and Councillor Scott) in particular for completing the project successfully and on budget.

Dr Kavermann also outlined the opportunity to release 200 rainbow trout near Otaki – in the river and a confined site near a reservoir. This had

increased the interest in fishing in the Otaki area, and increased angler activity had been observed.

After discussion it was moved

To receive the update on the novice fish and hunting programmes

Malcolm Francis/ Jim Cook

Carried

19. Management Report 1 October – 30 November 2017

Mr Teal indicated that Cawthron Institute had provided advice on the otolith micro-chemistry projects for water sampling for the Hutt River catchment, further sampling effort required for the Ruamahanga River catchment, and development of the work programme to include Rangitikei River sampling.

The GWRC Western River consents application is progressing through a mediation process to identify key submission points and whether they will be addressed prior to hearing. It was stated at a public meeting that GWRC Flood Protection had a desire to progress to a hearing shortly after Christmas but it is unlikely that enough progress will be made to meet those deadlines.

Information from the Whaitua Committee regarding detailed monitoring has been restricted to release of a report on *E. coli*.

Mr Teal noted that the short video developed by Mr Carnachan and Andrew Harding (provider) promoting the Wellington region fisheries had been used on social media with several thousand views. It was intended to use a segment of this video in Stuff and NZ Herald websites in December as a digital advertisement.

It was noted that DoC had planned to continue with extensive willow control in the Lake Wairarapa environs, but little is being done to control raupo.

After further discussion it was moved that

The management report for 1 October – 30 November 2017 be received.

Chris O'Meara/Marc Flaws

Carried

20. Fish & Game Licence Sales

Mr Teal referred to the summary in the project report documents noting that licence sales for fish were approximately 7% up on previous year's sales but were only approaching average sales for the last four years.

Mr Teal also provided a brief overview of the efforts being made regarding marketing opportunities being discussed to influence recruitment, retention, and re-engagement.

After further discussion it was moved

The Fish Licence Sales report as at 22 November 2017 be received

Malcolm Francis/Brad Johnson

Carried

21. Expenditure Report

After brief discussion it was moved that

the Expenditure Report for 31 October 2017 and Financial Transactions for September and October 2017 be approved

Chris O'Meara/Brad Johnson

Carried

22. Correspondence and Media

There was brief discussion on media and correspondence.

23. General Business

Mr Teal noted that Paul Browne (hunter) who has been providing staff with significant assistance with the management of Kilmore Lodge (including overseeing improvements to the fireplace) considered that Council should review their management fees from the current level of \$10 per night. Mr Teal was requested to undertake a budgeting exercise to note potential expenses in the next five years and assess whether additional funds are required.

Councillor Waechter gave a brief overview of the Fish in Schools programme in Stokes Valley with continued interest in tagging fish. It was noted that they had an excellent survival rate of fish from ova losing only fry from the consignment. They have also indicated a keenness to have a debrief with Hamish Carnachan to potentially expand their citizen science programmes to include children's parents in monitoring.

Councillor Francis acknowledged receipt of the merit award during the NZ Council field trip dinner and thanked Council for the recognition of his efforts as a long term honorary ranger. He thought the medallion that Wellington Fish & Game Council had developed was excellent and appropriate for such recognition.

There being no further business the meeting was concluded at 6.00pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Hotel Coachman, Palmerston North Tuesday 13 February 2017 at 3.00pm.

Chairman _____ Date _____