

**NORTHLAND FISH & GAME COUNCIL
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF A MEETING
HELD AT THE NORTHLAND FISH & GAME OFFICE
NELL PLACE, WHANGAREI
7.00 PM FRIDAY 9th February 2018**

PRESENT:

Chairman: Phil Durham

Councillors: Noel Birchall, Maurice Blyde, Chris Lynch, Mark McGinley, Mike Newson, Wayne Pepper, Darryl Reardon, Cameron Shanks.

Department of Conservation: Ross Atkinson

Staff: Rudi Hoetjes (Manager), Fay Stodart (Office Administrator)

The Chairman welcomed the Councillors to the Council table.

APOLOGIES: Dave Nicholson

It was moved: *That the apologies are accepted.*

Maurice Blyde/ Mike Newson

CARRIED.

Annual or One Year Agenda

February annual items requiring the Council's consideration include finalising the game notice, the Manager's Performance Review report and evaluation of the Council's Governance Review. Other items for the Council to consider were an application to release trout and the proposed conservation infringement notice system.

Conflicts of Interest Register

The conflicts of interest register was circulated for councillors to sign and identify whether or not there are any topics to be discussed at this meeting where they perceive a potential conflict may arise.

Previous Minutes

It was resolved: *That the minutes of the meeting held on the 1st December 2017 are confirmed as true and correct.*

Chris Lynch/Cameron Shanks

CARRIED.

Matters Arising

New Field Officer

The new field officer has been appointed and has commenced work on the 7th February. The successful candidate was John Macpherson who currently lives in Kaitaia and has been an honorary Fish & Game ranger for the past 7 years.

Habitat Grants

John Cheyne who visited the Underwood wetlands in November 2017 has recommended to the NZGBHT board members to support the funding application for stage one to construct five dams. Mr Cheyne also recommended to the trustees to support the other four stages to complete the wetland. The manager will resubmit the application and work should commence in the summer of 2018-2019.

The manager informed Council that DOC 200 traps has been set up on the Jack Bisset wetland. Also 12 DoC 200 traps have also been taken up to Kaitaia as part of the predator control programme in the Te Hiku Forest. DOC 200 traps are yet to be installed at the Flaxmill Wetland, but the manager is hopeful that this will be done shortly when weather permits.

Manager's Report

The Council considered the operational report with discussions on the following items:

1121 Kai Iwi Lakes

The manager briefly described the netting survey method which was carried out in December at the Kai Iwi Lakes. A report was included in the agenda for the Councillor's information. Galaxids were seen in various parts of the lakes whilst undertaking the survey. The manager intends to carry out another survey in late February. The council suggested the manager invite some of the iwi members of the working group to accompany him whilst performing these netting surveys.

1182 Special Paradise Shelduck Weekend

Murray Williams, a waterfowl biologist for the National Museum, is visiting the manager for the special paradise shelduck weekend to acquire some leg bones from approximately 40 shelduck for research purposes. Mr Williams wishes to compare the skeletal remains of the present shelduck with the remains of an extinct species of shelduck that used to reside on the Chatham Islands.

1211 District Plans

The hearings for the Northland Regional Plan will begin in July 2018 in different locations around the region. The manager is obtaining an estimate from an environmental barrister Sarah Ongley to lead the process at these hearings. Mischa Davis is currently preparing an application to submit to the legal pool fund of New Zealand Fish & Game Council.

1226.1 Underwood Wetland

The manager has applied to the Nature Heritage Fund to uplift the funds being held for weed control within the wetland. The majority of the funds will be spent in eradicating the Manchurian Rice Grass. The manager has proposed to NHF to use these funds to purchase an excavator mounted mulcher. This mulcher will be mounted on to an excavator or digger to mow the rice grass and then sprayed to try to eliminate this weed from the wetlands. The manager will notify the council if the application is approved.

1313 Permits and Ballots

The Department of Conservation has not approved Northland Fish & Game to issue any of the DOC permits for game bird hunting on conservation lands for the 2018 game season.

The 2018 Game Bird Regulation booklet has been changed to notify licence holders of this fact. Licence holders will be advised to contact their local DOC office to obtain a game bird permit to hunt on conservation lands.

1316 Northland Secondary Schools Clay Target Competition

The secondary school clay target competition will no longer take place at the Kaeo Gun Club as the club does not have any access to the facilities anymore. The first round of the competition will take place at the Whangarei Combined Club in Mangapai, Whangarei on the 10th March 2018. The competition round at Kaikohe is still uncertain and the manager is currently addressing this matter.

1411 Conservation Board & Department of Conservation

Te Paki Recreation Reserve will be closed for the upcoming game bird hunting season due to the gypsywort weed found here last year. Licence holders will be notified of this closure through our annual regional newsletter.

1521 Compliance and Law Enforcement Training

A two day CERTS training course will be held in Rotorua on the 10th and 11th March 2018. Three of the Northland Fish & Game rangers will be attending this course.

Fish & Game field officer, Andrew Kirk, will be attending the DOC compliance training course in Turangi on the 19th to 26th March 2018. The manager thanked Ross Atkinson, DOC representative, to allow Andrew to attend this course.

1821 Operational Work Plan

A draft operational work plan will be prepared for the 2018-2019 financial year and presented at the April council meeting. The manager invited the councillors to consider any projects that they may like to see developed and funded in the operational work plan.

1831 Annual Report

A copy of the audit management letter was included in the agenda for Councillor's information. The Councillors congratulated the staff and acknowledged the auditor's management letter. Their comments reflected well on the Council and its staff.

1900 Administration

The new field officer, John Macpherson, has taken possession of the Isuzu Fish & Game vehicle. This vehicle was sign written with the Fish & Game logo on the doors and a Maori translation of Northland Fish & Game on the windows of the canopy.

The Council purchased another vehicle for the manager. The Council approved purchasing another vehicle for the manager last year. This purchase will be taken from reserves the council holds.

The manager circulated a confidential spread sheet of the purchase price of the Isuzu Mu x and the comparison of prices of other similar vehicles.

It was moved: *That the Manager's Activity Report is received.*

Wayne Pepper/ Mark McGinley

CARRIED.

Field Officer Report

The Council discussed the Field Officer's Report briefly.

It was moved: *That the Field Officers Activity Report is received.*

Darryl Reardon / Maurice Blyde

CARRIED.

Trend Count Report

The council considered the trend count report. The Manager commented that there were good numbers of birds seen when carrying out the trend counts.

It was moved: *That the Council receives the trend count report and adopts the 2017-2018 Game Season Gazette recommendations for keeping the regulations set at the current daily bag limits and season lengths.*

Chris Lynch/Wayne Pepper

CARRIED.

NZFGC Updates

Release of Captive Reared Mallards Review

All regional Fish & Game councils were invited to comment and discuss the release of captive reared mallards (CRMs) into the wild with a view to developing a national policy for the guidance of regional Fish & Game Councils, Department of Conservation (DOC), and people applying to DOC for authorisation to undertake this and related activities.

The Council discussed the report on captive reared mallards, written by Dr Williams and also the letter received via email from Jeff Niblett of NZ Game birds, as a precursor to making recommendations to the NZFGC to determine what Northland Fish and Game position is in relation to the following matters:

- I. Is Fish & Game supportive of releasing CRMs as a tool to augment wild populations?
Northland Fish & Game voted AGAINST.
- II. Is Fish & Game supportive of releasing CRMs as a tool that could be used to hasten the recovery of wild populations that are at low levels as a consequence for example, of a series of very poor breeding seasons or serious botulism outbreaks arising from climatic conditions, or over harvesting?
Northland Fish & Game voted AGAINST.
- III. Does Fish & Game support the concept of "put and take" operations where CRMs are released for the principal purpose of providing an immediate hunting opportunity?
Northland Fish & Game voted AGAINST.
- IV. If the latter is something Fish & Game wishes to facilitate, support or promote, would we accept the development of commercial enterprises run along the lines of many upland game operations, or would we require "put and take" operations to be a non-commercial nature only?
Northland Fish & Game voted NO

- V. If Fish & Game allows release of “put and take” operations, would we wish to see the birds hunted in a similar way to how wild mallards are hunted now, or would we be accepting of the upland game equivalent of “driven hunts” where birds are encouraged to fly over hunters from Point A to Point B, or some other approach?

Northland Fish & Game voted NO

It was moved: *That Northland Fish & Game Council rejects any development of Captive Reared Mallards (CRMs) and questions the legality of doing so under Section 23 of the Wildlife Act.*

Darryl Reardon/Wayne Pepper **CARRIED.**

Salmon Committee: Terms of Reference

NZ Fish & Game Council invited consultation and feedback from regional Fish & Game councils on establishing the terms of reference for a Fish & Game NZ National Salmon Committee.

Northland Fish & Game Council discussed the suggested recommendations that would lead to the terms of Reference for a National Salmon Committee. The Councillors believed that this paper did not affect the Northland region as there are no salmon in the region.

The Councillors agreed that the following wording should be removed or modified from the suggested recommendations:

8) Seek the support of government and other statutory entities and the ways they can support the welfare of salmon.

Northland Fish & Game agreed that this statement should be REMOVED.

14) Report on activities primarily to the New Zealand Council but also to Regional Councils and those parties who form the membership of the committee.

Northland Fish & Game Council agreed that this statement should read:

14) Report on activities to the New Zealand Council.

It was moved: *Northland Fish & Game Council agreed to delete point 8) and modify note 14) in the suggested recommendations to the Terms of Reference for a National Salmon Committee.*

Maurice Blyde/Cameron Shanks **CARRIED.**

Governance Councillor Performance Review

Governance Policy 11.3.2 states that “*The Council shall every 12 months carry out a review of its performance*” *The Council’s Performance Evaluation Review is on an annual basis which will be held at the first meeting of each calendar year.*

Personal evaluations from the councillors were collected by the Chairman. The Chairman will collate all of the results and convey them at the next council meeting.

Fish & Game Property Hunting Permit Conditions

The Councillors discussed the draft terms and conditions for game bird hunting permits on Fish & Game owned properties and agreed on all points except for the following:

- Modifications to points 5 and 6
- Delete point 16

The councillors wished to include in the permit, the requirement for all stand holders to mark their stand within the wetlands.

The Councillors also considered whether feeding of birds should be allowed within the Fish & Game owned wetlands. The Councillors agreed to survey the licence holders at the next game bird hunting season by including a question on game bird returns. The manager will include a questionnaire on whether feeding of birds should occur before the opening weekend and if so, how long before opening weekend should feeding stop.

Auditors Management Letter

It was moved: *That the Auditor’s Management letter is received and acknowledged by the Northland Fish & Game Council.*

Noel Birchall/Mike Newson *CARRIED.*

Manager’s Annual Performance Review

The Chairman will arrange a suitable meeting date for an end of year performance review with the manager. The Chairman requested that this matter lay on the table.

Health & Safety Bi-monthly Report

Northland Fish & Game is required to give a Health & Safety report at each Council meeting detailing:

- The implementation and adherence to Health & Safety policy/manual
- Any new issues or hazards that have arisen and how these have been addressed.
- Progress with any ongoing issues.
- Outcomes of audits and reviews required in the Health & Safety manual.
- Any near misses or injuries.

It was moved: *That the Health and Safety Report is received.*

Darryl Reardon/Mike Newson *CARRIED.*

Managers Financial Report

The financial administrator gave a brief summary on the financial report. A spread sheet on the licence sales to 31st January 2018 was printed and sent to all councillors in the post.

It was moved: *That the Financial Report to the 31st December 2017 is adopted.*

Cameron Shanks/ Mark McGinley *CARRIED.*

Executive Limitations Report

It was moved: **That the Executive Limitations Report is received.**

Mike Newson/Maurice Blyde

CARRIED.

Correspondence Schedule

The inward and outward correspondence was approved by Chris Lynch.

General Business

A media release on “*Beloved Brown Trout damage native fish, insects and waterways*” was circulated to all councillors. Dr Phillip Jellyman, a freshwater fish ecologist at NIWA co-wrote an article on the brown trout and the damage they have on native fish and waterways. The article acknowledges the importance of brown trout to recreational anglers and the New Zealand economy.

April Fish & Game Council Meeting

The Manager informed council that the new CEO of New Zealand Fish & Game has indicated that he proposes to come to the next Northland Fish & Game Council meeting to meet with the councillors and staff.

Proposed Conservation Infringement Notice System

Fish & Game NZ applied to the Minister of the previous government to be included in the proposed conservation infringement notice system. The Minister at the time thought Fish & Game did not qualify and could not be considered for inclusion.

NZFG Council is now reapplying to the new Minister of Conservation, Eugenie Sage, to have the same powers of DOC rangers.

Application to release trout

The manager received an application from a local licence holder to release trout into his pond at Mangakahia Road, Whangarei. The applicant intends to landscape the surrounds and clear out all raupo and aquatic weed. The lake or pond is fed by natural springs and covers approximately 10 acres. The applicant will allow access to the public if trout is introduced to the lake. The manager was requested by Council to investigate the possibilities and the potential fish out pond for junior anglers.

Manager’s overseas Report

The Manager has started his report on his sabbatical to the USA and the wildlife conference he attended last year. The manager assures the council that the report will be completed before the April meeting and then reimbursement for the trip can be reimbursed from NZFG Council.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10.15pm.

Phil Durham
Chairman

