

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF

If you require further elaboration or clarification of items contained herein, or any other matters relating to F&GC business, please don't hesitate to contact your local ward councillor or the office

Matters Arising from the Council Meeting of 18 August 2018

- The Chairman spoke on the recent passing of Dan Madsen who gave many years of service to Fish and Game both as an Auckland/Waikato and NZ councillor.
- The Chairman of the NZ Fish and Game Council, Mr Lindsay Lyons, attended the meeting and was invited to speak. Mr Lyons emphasised his close relationship to the Waikato region having been brought up on a dairy farm next to Lake D on the outskirts of Hamilton. He was a founding member of the Waikato branch of Ducks Unlimited and had a maimai on Lake Ngaroto for many years. Mr Lyons then spoke on the NZ Council advising that they were currently being carried out three regional audits at the request of the Minister of Conservation. The audits arose due to concerns by councillors and/or members of the public over conflicts of interest and lack of governance.
- Mr Lyons informed Councillors that the Eastern Region has agreed to the raising and release of sterile rainbow trout.
- Councillor Juby suggested that a “big picture” report would be useful, integrating all the current survey methods to present a State of the Fishery report.
- Mr Wilson gave a brief summary of the new guidelines from the Auditor General regarding Fish and Game reporting with more emphasis on why councils do activities and what were the impacts.
- Councillors discussed the replacement of the ATV, remarking on the high maintenance costs, and made suggestions as to its replacement.
- Mr Wilson spoke on the proposed Waikato District Plan and the potential impact on restoration and maintenance work on Council's wetlands. A comprehensive submission was being prepared by Mischa Davies.
- Mr Wilson spoke on the 2018/19 budget stressing his disappointment that he couldn't present a final budget as the NZ Council had not yet considered Council's request for a salary increase for the RMA staff. The 2018/19 Operational Work Plan and budget of \$789,508 (conditional on the NZ Council approving \$5,000 for salary adjustments) was approved.
- Councillors discussed the draft Standing Orders, which were based on the *Model Rules for Conduct of Regional Fish and Game Council's Meetings*. The Chairman stated that he didn't consider that the draft was materially different from Council's existing standing orders except they were a bit “tighter” regarding the running of Council meetings. Councillors agreed that the current standing orders had rarely been referred to in recent years but were a necessary backstop in case of potential discord.
- Mr Dyer's report on Grey Teal was discussed with several Councillors concerned that numbers were not adequate to sustain ongoing harvest. However, Mr Dyer considered that the Grey Teal population would be relatively easy to monitor and that the current population could sustain harvest. It was agreed that Mr Dyer's report on Grey Teal be sent to the NZ Council with the recommendation that they request the Minister of Conservation to transfer Grey Teal to the 1st Schedule of the Wildlife Act 1953 to become “Wildlife declared to be game”. Councillors Howard and Shaw requested that their votes in opposition to the motion be recorded.

Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report

Pheasant Releases: John Dyer has carried out onsite visits for two applications for new pheasant preserves. One application was subsequently withdrawn and may not be going ahead.

Gamebird control: Pukeko continue to be a problem for commercial gardeners with permits issued where it isn't suitable for shotguns to be fired. Local hunters are helping a Hamilton daffodil grower to control pukeko, with about 30-40 birds pulling out young plants.

Waikato District Plan review: The Waikato District Council are currently accepting submissions on the Proposed Waikato District Plan. Key changes that we will be seeking in our submission will be in relation to the rural zone such as hunting being allowed as a permitted activity and being exempt from noise rules, and earthworks for wetland creation, maintenance and enhancement being allowed as a permitted activity. Other changes we will be seeking include buffer/setback rules for building near wetlands, allowing for all signs erected by Fish and Game to be a permitted activity, and including provisions that acknowledge the recreational values of gamebird hunting and sportfishing in the Waikato District.

Fonterra Te Rapa: A submission was made on the Fonterra application to renew a discharge consent to the Waikato River. Our submission stated that the limits applied for are too high and should not exceed current discharge levels; for a long consent term they should still require a reduction.

Fonterra Tirau: Fonterra has agreed to our proposal to make a financial contribution for every year that the plant upgrade is delayed. Amendments to the consent, and an associated side agreement have been proposed and tabled for consideration by Fish and game, DOC, and Raukawa iwi. The agreement is that \$50,000 will be put into a fund administered by Fonterra for restoration projects in the Oraka catchment every year for 3 years.

North & Central Shepherd: North Shepherd maimais and ponds were inspected and the pondholders of several that fell short of the grade were contacted.

Auckland Council Pest Management Plan and Budget 2028: Auckland Council reached their decision on the 10-year Budget and Auckland Plan 2050 which we submitted on back in March. They approved the proposal to deliver a 30 year water quality programme in 10 years by bringing \$856 million of future investment into the next 10 years. They also approved \$311 million over 10 years for environmental initiatives which include pest management and of this \$5.53 million will go towards freshwater pest management of which about half will go into managing pest fish in Lakes Ototoa and Tomarata.

Auckland Council Rates Remission and Postponement Policy: We made a submission in April opposing Auckland Council's proposal to adopt a new Rates Remission and Postponement Policy which would remove the rates remission for privately protected, or covenanted land replace it with grants schemes.

Trees: This year's tree order was received and dispatched to clubs and individuals conducting projects.

Access Negotiation: We continue to negotiate with Hancock Forest Management over an access agreement to the upper Ongarue River.

Landcorp: Dr Adam Daniel submitted a formal request to Martin Taylor on 12 June to negotiate access on the two upper Whakapapa Landcorp farms with Landcorp's national office. The request included maps and descriptions of 9 potential access points that need to be formalized with parking and signage. Attempts to access the farms has been hit and miss despite the property being in public ownership. Although the access will be primarily walk-in it will allow access to prime fishing areas.