

# **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 13 October 2018**

- Councillor Annan asked whether the NZ Council had approved the salary increase for the RMA staff. Mr Wilson replied that the request had been declined and no reason had been given. Discussion ensued over the lack of communication between NZ Council and the regions, and the increasing intrusion of the NZ Council on regional decision making.
- Mr Wilson summarised the Fish & Game submission on the proposed Waikato District Plan noting that Mischa Davis had put a huge effort into the submission which concentrated on minimising the restrictions on wetland restoration work, but also on other issues such as getting hunting permitted as a rural activity and Fish & Game signage.
- Mr Wilson spoke on the recent meeting between DoC, F&G, and Kiwi Rail to discuss the proposed double tracking of the railway line through the Whangamarino Wetland, 7km of which would be bordering F&G wetlands. There were numerous issues with the proposal including impacts on hydrology and water quality. In the medium term, 10-15 years, the introduction of fast express trains on this route would make the three railway crossings that provide access to F&G wetlands no longer viable in their present form.
- Mr Klee updated the meeting on his recent discussions with DoC concerning proposed concessions for storage sheds in the Kopuatai wetland and Flax Block. This was considered by Councillors to be a revenue gathering exercise and concern was expressed that the fees were excessive, and the funds would not be spent on the wetland. Councillors also emphasised that hunters ran predator control programmes and controlled invasive weeds. Doubt was expressed that DoC knew the extent of or appreciated these hunter activities. It appeared that this was an issue currently restricted to the Waikato, but which could act as a precedent elsewhere.
- Mr Klee spoke on the Te Kauwhata Waste Water Treatment Plant consents and expressed his disappointment at the lack of consultation with the public consultative group set up as part of the consent process. A land option appears to have been excluded from further consideration, but no explanation had been given as to why.
- The public were excluded from part of the meeting while the Council discussed the proposed purchase of land
- Mr Wilson spoke on the financial statements, informing Councillors that the surplus for the year would be some \$560,000 mainly due to the mitigation agreement with NZTA negotiated by Mr Klee, and that Council had operated within its overall budget constraints.
- Councillors discussed the role of the NZ Council. Concerns raised by Councillors included the lack of transparency due to the overuse of Public Excluded sessions, the lack of communications, and Martin Taylor's comments that structural changes were required to the entire Fish and Game organisation.
- Councillor Howard spoke on the threat of trout farming and Councillors agreed that momentum was growing for another push for it to be legalised.

## Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report

**Shoveler:** Fish and Game recently carried out a national count of shoveler duck (*Spatula rhynchotis*). In this region, the count involved staff and keen volunteers from throughout the region. One highlight was seeing a couple of Northern Shoveler (they're found in North America and Europe), that have strayed to New Zealand. Over the 19 years the population of Shoveler appears to be stable.

**Gamebird harvest survey:** Population estimates for dabbling ducks remain moderate, and a decrease from last years can in part be attributed to a very low reporting rate estimate compared to previous years.

**Martha Mine:** We lodged an objection to the application by Oceana Gold Ltd in Waihi to take water from the Ohinemuri River to flood the Martha mine and create a lake. Little supporting evidence was supplied by the applicant.

**Meremere Cleanfill site:** We have met with the applicant who indicated there should be no change to the water flows entering or leaving the North Shepherd Wetland. However, John Dyer has since located and photographed a culvert to the north of the cleanfill site, and the applicant has indicated they are going to further investigate how this culvert may impact flooding.

**Healthy Rivers (Plan Change 1):** The final Summary of Decisions Requested was notified and Anna Sintenie has now drafted, finalised and lodged Fish and Game's Further Submission document. Fish and Game has been served with further submissions from a number of other parties.

**Waikato District Plan review:** Key changes that are seeking in our submission on the review of the Waikato District Plan were mainly 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 sought include buffer/setback rules for building near wetlands, allowing for all signs erected by Fish and Game to be a permitted activity.

**North Emmett Wetland.** We've been meeting with Babbage Consultants concerning the work planned by Synlait within our North Emmett Wetland, as mitigation for a wetland lost on their own construction site.

**Wetland Site Visits:** David conducted a further four site visits with landowners to assess areas for wetland restoration potential and explore funding opportunities.

**Flax Block and Kopuatai Wetland:** David attended a meeting with representatives from DOC and the UPWMA to discuss the ongoing management of the Flax Block and huts in the Kopuatai Wetland.

**Tree Order:** This year's annual tree order was dispatched.

**Ongarue River:** The agreement with Hancock Forest Management for access to the road thru the property owned by the Black Fern Lodge was signed and will be publicised in the fish newsletter.

**Fish newsletter:** The annual preseason fish newsletter will go out in October. Thanks to Nigel Juby for his assistance.

**Bio Security:** Adam is the NZ Fish and Game biosecurity adviser. In this role, he has been assisting with the government's refresh of the Check Clean Dry (CCD) programme at a national level.

**Ranging:** We had some good court outcomes from the ranging activities conducted by David and Adam on the Hauraki plains. One set of offenders were convicted of the charge of use of lead shot, and fined \$500, court costs of \$130, solicitors cost of \$800 and order for forfeiture for their respective seized shotguns. These were long time experienced hunters that continued to use lead shot over water despite knowing they were not supposed to do so.