

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 Council Meeting of 9th February 2019

1. Michelle Houghton and John Finnerty were awarded Council's Merit Certificate for outstanding service and contribution to the Council, wildlife and conservation. Michelle was secretary and treasurer of the Hamilton Fish & Game Association for the last 23 years. John donated the use of land on Collins Rd for a tree nursery some 25 years ago.
2. Council agreed to the revised game hunting code of conduct becoming national policy and being included in the 2020 gamebird hunting regulation guide book.
3. Council agreed that the proposed national policy on the acceptance and utilisation of bequests be supported as national policy.
4. Council agreed that the proposed policy on Setting National Policy, with amendments, be supported as national policy.
5. Councillors discussed the report "Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions" with concerns expressed over the moving of commercial preserves to Schedule 3 of the Wildlife Act by the Minister of Conservation, especially the setting of a precedent and where this could lead. The opinion was expressed that because commercial preserves had never been legal there should be no phase out period.

The Chairman invited visitors to the meeting to contribute to the discussion.

Mr James Kellow expressed his concern that any change to the Wildlife Act could also affect trout fishing and duck shooting opportunities and this should be avoided. Both he and Mr Guy Ralph had met with Martin Taylor and it was Mr Kellow's understanding that the Auckland/Waikato syndicate model would be adopted nationally.

Mr Rick Stephens praised the Auckland/Waikato syndicate model which he considered transparent and user friendly. He considered that the system wasn't broken but was working well. However, he was concerned that phasing out commercial operations would lead to a reduced demand for young stock and this would lead to much higher costs for small syndicates.

Mr Richard Radonich, a member of a syndicate in the Eastern Region, stated that he supported change to the Wildlife Act to allow for the hunting of upland game for a fee.

Councillors then addressed the five questions provided in the report prepared by Robert Sowman on behalf of the NZ Fish & Game Council.

Council reconfirmed the current Auckland/Waikato policy of agreeing to non-commercial upland game properties operated by syndicates with costs shared, but not providing hunting for a fee.

Council reconfirmed its opposition to the hunting of gamebirds for a fee.

Council reconfirmed its policy of allowing ducks to be shot on upland game properties with special conditions, but not on days when upland game are hunted.

Council did not support the legislation being changed to allow the sale of hunting rights on upland game properties with special conditions.

Matters Arising From Chief Executive's Report

- **Tom O'Connor** A former councillor with the Auckland Acclimatisation Society, Tom was awarded a New Zealand Order of Merit in the New Year's Honours List for services to seniors, local government and journalism. Media reports noted his time spent as an acclimatisation society and F&G councillor.
- **Duck banding:** After initial reservations about the number of ducks at the Hauraki Plains banding site, we ended up with a record single day catch of 1083.
- **Shelduck:** The King Country paradise shelduck trend count is in. The threshold for a special season is 6,000 birds trend counted, (ie. it is not a total count). After ground-truthing the initial estimate, the total number counted was 5,602 shelduck. It is likely that the 7 week long main season, (May-June), for parries there is enough to keep them from becoming a problem for some farmers. Hunters there are much more familiar now with how and where to hunt this species and have better equipment now, for instance, life-like 3-D decoys to replace crude plywood silhouettes.
- **Lake Moananui:** Ten large tagged rainbow trout were released into Lake Moananui for the fishing competition run by the Tokoroa club.
- **Permits to cull/disturb:** We've been granted an authorisation from DOC to issue permits to cull/disturb gamebirds out of season and to delegate such authorities until 27th December 2027. Thanks to Robert Sowman for organising this.
- **Management Plan:** We have begun drafting a new 10-year management plan and hope to have a draft ready for notification later this year.

RMA issues that we have been working on over the last two months include

- **Whangamarino Weir Section 128 Review**
- **Meremere Cleanfill site:** We had another meeting with the consultants for the proposed cleanfill site adjacent to our North Shepherd Wetland.
- **Open Country Dairy factory discharge to the Waitoa River**
- **Martha Mine:** Both Anna and Adam gave evidence regarding our concerns over the proposed abstraction of water from the Ohinemuri River to fill the Martha Mine pit.
- **Healthy Rivers:** Work continues on the Healthy River plan change including reviewing all of the environmental bands that the council plans to have as their minimum standards for rivers.
- **Waste Water Treatment Plant:** We're trying to get botulism management plans instated at all plants in the region.
- **North Emmett Wetland** was planted by Kauri Park Nurseries with some 8 thousand native plants.
- **North & Central Shepherd Wetlands:** Yellow Flag in this wetland had a good hold but has just received 600-litres of spray from F&G staff along all the internal tracks. Alligator weed is also present in 2 locations and is also being addressed. We'll need to follow these plants up in future working bees.
- **Kaniwhaniwha Stream:** Adam investigated a reported fish kill on the Kaniwhaniwha. No dead fish were spotted and likely had been washed away as there were several healthy fish locating in the area the fish kill was reported.