

**NORTHLAND FISH & GAME COUNCIL
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING
HELD AT THE NORTHLAND FISH & GAME OFFICE
NELL PLACE, WHANGAREI
7.00 PM FRIDAY 12th AUGUST 2016**

PRESENT:

Chairman: Phil Durham

Councillors: Kris Batelaan, Maurice Blyde, Noel Birchall, Ian Hogarth, Chris Lynch, Dave Nicholson, Darryl Reardon, Cameron Shanks.

Conservation

Board Members: Alan Martin

Staff: Rudi Hoetjes (Manager), Andrew Kirk (Field Officer)
Fay Stodart (Office Administrator)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the table.

APOLOGIES: Mike Newson, Wayne Pepper

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

Dave Nicholson/Maurice Blyde **CARRIED.**

Annual or One Year Agenda

August annual items requiring the Council's consideration include the final sign off of the 2016-2017 Operational Work Plan.

Previous Minutes

No discussion occurred on the minutes of the last meeting.

It was resolved: *That the minutes of the meeting held on the 10th June 2016 are confirmed as true and correct.*

Ian Hogarth/Cameron Shanks **CARRIED.**

Matters Arising

The Manager informed Council that he had not received any correspondence or heard anything on the submission for the Kai Iwi Lakes Draft Management Plan that was sent in March. Kaipara District Council Staff have advised the Commissioners intend to finalise the Management Plan before the regional elections are held in October.

The NZ Council has put forward names for three positions to the Minister of Conservation to be appointed on the NZ Game Bird Habitat Trust. The NZ Council has also recommended a name for chairperson of the Trust Board. The position of the Chairperson is appointed by the Minister.

The Manager informed Council that he had not met with the Landcorp Farm Managers in the Far North about the access on to Landcorp Farms for game bird hunting. The Manager stated that he is not willing to organise a Canada Geese shoot in the Far North but will help promote the organised shoot.

Manager's Report

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

1112 Shoveler Survey

The Manager and the Field Officer carried out the annual shoveler survey on the week of the 8th August. They reported seeing only small numbers of shoveler in various sites.

1181 Game Bird Dispersal

The Council enquired on the number of gas guns out on hire at present. The Council contemplated on publicising in the local rural newspapers on the hire of gas guns to minimise crop depredation. The Manager advised Council that habitat in the Far North is changing and more horticultural crops are being grown.

The Council discussed a situation that the Manager had heard on a case of poisoning of game birds in the Far North.

1811 Sports Fish & Game Management Plan

The Manager notified the Council that Corina Jordan, the Environmental Manager based in Wellington Fish & Game has resigned. The Wellington F&G Manager has readvertised the position and has now employed Peter Wilson who is a Planner/RMA from Otago Fish & Game region.

Mr Wilson has advised Northland Fish & Game that he will help with updating the Northland Fish & Game Sports Management Plan. He wants to create a common template for all regions to use so each region can regionalise the plan to suit their region. This would provide uniformity between regions with a common planning document.

1900 Administration

Andrew Kirk, the new Field Officer introduced himself to the Council and gave a brief background on his employment history and qualifications. As a child, he was raised up in a hunting and fishing environment. He informed the Council that his wife is expecting their first child in a couple of weeks. His goal is to encourage more Fish & Game licences in the Northland region by targeting the younger population.

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

Kris Batelaan/Maurice Blyde

CARRIED.

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.

The new Field Officer has completed his First Aid Certificate and needs to undertake a refresher course in the Powerboat Level 2 Boating assessment.

It was moved: *That the Health and Safety Report – August 2016 is accepted.*

Ian Hogarth/Cameron Shanks

CARRIED.

NZFG Council Update

Councillor Birchall attended a NZFG meeting in Wellington on the 22nd and 23rd July 2016. The unconfirmed minutes were received by the Councillors. Councillor Birchall gave a brief account to the Council:

- The Minister of Conservation approved the increase to the 2016/17 sports fish licence and 2017 game bird habitat stamp fees. The adult whole season sports fish licence will be \$125 and the 2017 game bird licence adult whole season will be \$90 plus \$3 for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp (GST inclusive).
- Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council was approved funding to the amount of \$65,000 from the National Legal Fund for an Environmental Court hearing regarding the discharge by the AFFCO meat works in the lower Waikato River. This application has been withdrawn as the Waitoa Wallace Group wish to settle out of court.
- Northland Regional Council Environmental Committee proposes to remove Black Swan and Paradise Shelduck from the game bird status in Northland region only. The Council will discuss this matter later in the meeting under Correspondence.
- Northland Fish & Game requested an adjusted payment regime to cover the cash flow situation due to the bulk of its revenue coming through game bird licence sales. This request was approved and supported by the NZ Council.
- An application for the implementation of the One Plan Nutrient Management rules by Wellington Fish & Game Council is approved for funding from the National Legal Fund of legal costs of \$95,000 for the 2016/17 financial year. The court cases are now finished and the Wellington F&G will ensure the decision will be implemented.
- An audit working group will be formed to establish templates and protocols so that the NZC can complete audits according to the Conservation Act.
- Economic value of trout in New Zealand. The NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers wish to commission a study of the economic contribution of trout fishing to the New Zealand economy.
- A letter on the Hakataramea River was considered by the Council where much of the flood plain and riverbed are being reshaped for farming purposes. The NZ Council proposes to write a letter to ECan expressing their concerns.
- National Licence Sales and Licence systems update. It was determined that more fish licences have been sold this season but less revenue was received than targeted. It was agreed that the introduction of the new licence categories and the move away from paper licences has been a success and to run with the same categories again for another season.
- Land Occupier Licence to Fish and Hunt. The NZC consults with all regions on a proposed free fish and game licence for land occupiers when fishing or hunting on their own property.
- Lou Sanson, the Director General of the Dept. of Conservation spoke to NZC on several Departmental flagship projects.
- IRD letter on taxable income. Three Fish & Game regions have received letters from Inland Revenue Department requesting that these regions may be taxed on all income. The NZC will seek a legal interpretation on the letter from IRD and will provide a single national response from Fish & Game NZ.
- Wellington Fish & Game advertised for a Senior Environmental Planner vacancy. The NZC agreed that the Chairman will write to Wellington Fish & Game explaining why the position advertised was unacceptable to the NZ Council.

Correspondence

Fish & Game Elections

The Returning Officer, Warwick Lampp presented a report to the New Zealand Fish & Game Council on the 2015 regional Council elections. The Returning Officer's report included a number of suggestions for improvement in conducting the Fish & Game Council elections. NZ Council invited all regions to consider and provide some feedback on the issues raised by the Returning Officer.

1. The same independent Returning Officer should be appointed for all twelve regions.
Northland Fish & Game Council agreed
2. To increase participation, allow all licence holders to vote in the election as of right or allow registration up to the close of voting date.
Northland Fish & Game Council disagreed. The Council believed that this statement should be reworded to include "Adult Whole Season Licence Holders".
3. Review the process around the electorate selection. A specific field should be included on both the paper and online licence purchase forms for that purpose.
Northland Fish & Game Council agreed
4. Encourage licence holders to record their email address wherever possible.
Northland Fish & Game Council agreed
5. Remove the option for candidates to submit their candidate profiles in handwritten or PDF format. Insisting on MS Word document format supply will reduce processing times and potential errors in the profile booklets. Consider using photos along with the profile statements.
Northland Fish & Game Council agreed with the first statement using MS Word Document format but DID NOT agree with using photos along with the profile statement.
6. Review the procedures for updating of the databases by regional managers and Eyede and ensure that dates of birth and email addresses are recorded for all licence holders, and that overseas licence holders are not included.
Northland Fish & Game Council agreed
7. Extend the number of days that voting papers can be accepted to four days after the close of voting to allow for longer postal delivery service by NZ Post.
Northland Fish & Game Council agreed

The Council also discussed ways of getting more participation from the licence holders to vote and to stand as a Councillor for their region.

Correspondence

Preparations of an RM Strategy

NZFG Council has requested feedback on a draft strategy to manage Resource Management practices and outcomes. The Northland Fish & Game Council reviewed the draft plan and agreed and supported the plan in principle but thought that the document was flawed and there should be more reference to wetlands and habitat in their objectives.

The Council considered each objective:

- The Council agreed with the overarching outcome statement.
- Objective 1- Resource Management Law and National Policy. The Council believed that the statement should read: *The recreational and intrinsic values of freshwater and their habitat and the right of New Zealanders to safe, life supporting wetlands and fishable rivers is recognised by Government and protected in law.*
- The Council discussed and agreed with all other objectives in the Plan.

Correspondence

Functions for SOP Treatment

The NZFG Council asked all regions for their top 5 priorities of Fish & Game functions that lend themselves to initial SOP treatment. The Northland Council considered and agreed on the following 5 priorities:

1. Financial Reporting. A consistent financial report from all regions.
2. A national Health & Safety Policy and implementation.
3. Training of Governors and Chairpersons.
4. Procedure to set bag limits for Fish and Game Bird hunting seasons.
5. A standardised template for the Sports Fish & Game Management Plan.

Correspondence

Land Occupier Licence to Fish and Hunt

The NZFG Council invited all regions to consider a proposed free fish and game licence for land occupiers when fishing or hunting on their own property. The Northland Council discussed the Conservation Act 1987 on the “lawful occupier” and supported the law in theory but concluded that it was very impractical. The Council also knows that the rangers find it very difficult to determine who are the land occupiers and land owners when out ranging. The Council discussed whether to advertise to the farmers before each opening season to purchase a licence to obtain all information on bag limits and regulations.

It was moved: *That the Northland Fish & Game Council does not support the proposed free fish and game licence for land occupiers when fishing or hunting on their own property.*

Kris Batelaan/Ian Hogarth

CARRIED.

Correspondence

Angling Ethics – Catch and Release

At a recent meeting, the NZ Council considered a paper from the West Coast Fish & Game Council on angling ethics. NZ Council invited all regions to discuss whether Fish & Game should develop a policy on the ethics of catch and release fishing and if so what such a policy might include.

The Northland Council discussed the ethics on catch and release and thought that there should be more education on the handling of fish when caught and the damage to fish if they are played too long. The Council agreed that the “Code of Conduct” in the regulation booklet may need rewording in the catch and release paragraph.

The Council believed that all fish caught in the Northland region in the summer months should be kept as the fish would unlikely survive.

Correspondence

Ban of use of Lead Shot

NZFG Council sent a letter from the Minister of Conservation to all Fish & Game regions requesting to bring forward the review date of the sub-gauge exemption for the use of lead shot by one year. The Manager presented a Power Point presentation on banning the use of lead shot made by Fish & Game Southland. The presentation broke down the Minister’s letter into four questions.

Question 1: Can you please provide me with any evidence or survey results that show me what is happening in regard to changes in the use of lead shot in sub-gauge guns for game bird hunting over the past 10 years?

Recent survey results show 92% use 12 gauge and 8% use 20 gauge

Question 2: Can you please advise why lead shot should not be phased out for all waterfowl hunting in New Zealand?

The 20 gauge gun is used by many junior, female and older senior hunters to learn to shoot or hunt.

Question 3: I understand you have been planning to revisit the issue in 2017; however, I would like you to bring this forward, reassess the phasing out of lead shot in all waterfowl hunting and provide me with your advice.

The Council discussed the phasing out of lead shot and believed that there should be a lead in period to phase out all lead shot over the next five years. The Council also thought that the ban of lead shot should be universal and the ruling should cover all shooters, not just Fish & Game licence holders.

Question 4: If there is any evidence that alternatives are available and that the lead shot ban can be extended to sub-gauge shotguns used over water, I would welcome any initiative Fish & Game might take to proceed with this.

The Council discussed the viable alternatives of steel shot for 20 gauge guns. The ammunition is very expensive which would deter many hunters/licence holders. The ammunition must be more affordable for all hunters.

The Council discussed this issue at length and the harmful effect of birds digesting lead. The Council was also concerned on the damage control that it would have on Fish & Game's reputation and licence sales it may cost.

It was moved: *Northland Fish & Game Council would not support the ban of lead shot unless the Minister requires a ban on all lead shot over waterways for all types of hunting with shotguns, the ammunition was more affordable, there is a phase in period of five years and there is an exemption for 4/10 and muzzle loaders.*

It was moved: *That Northland Fish & Game support the review to be brought forward by one year.*

To be confirmed at the next Council meeting.

Correspondence

NRC - Black Swan Correspondence

The Manager updated the Council on the complaints of Black Swan and Paradise Shelduck in the Far North received by Northland Regional Council. The Manager for the Northland Fish & Game Council requested an Official Information Act asking for all copies of letters, emails and phone logs on these complaints. NRC has sent this correspondence to Northland Fish & Game with all names and email addresses blacked out.

An Environmental Committee for the Northland Regional Council has written to the Minister of Conservation requesting that the game bird status of Black Swan and Paradise Shelduck be changed or removed from Schedule 1 in Northland.

The Manager informed the Council that he is currently accumulating the number of bird scaring guns hired out, permits to control game birds out of season issued, hunter harvest results and the trend counts for past nine years, separating the complaints into Area A (Far North) and Rest of Area. This report will be sent to the Minister's office.

The Northland Fish & Game office has received no requests from Iwi to take game birds out of season for any cultural activities. The Chairman will approach the local MP's to discuss this matter with them.

Adoption of 2016-2017 Operational Work Plan

The Manager highlighted the different areas in the operational plan where savings had been made in the past financial year and was redistributed to other areas of the work plan. The budget for the 2016-2017 financial years is \$400,540. The Council adopted the operational work plan for the Northland region.

It was moved: *That the 2016-2017 Operational Work Plan be adopted and approved.*

Chris Lynch/Darryl Reardon

CARRIED.

Underwood Wetland Wildlife Management Plan

The draft management proposal for the Underwood Wetland was placed on the Fish & Game website with hunters who have an email address being advised to view the document and to make comments. The Council received four submissions, all of which were positive and congratulatory of the purchase the Council has made.

The Council considered the 9.4 Clause on Structures and the Council decided to change the permanent structure for any maimais to maimais as temporary blinds.

It was moved: *That the Underwood Wetland Management Plan is adopted and approved with the minor changes to Clause 9.4 on Structures.*

Dave Nicholson/Maurice Blyde

CARRIED.

Financial Report for period ending 30th June 2016

It was moved: *That the financial report is adopted.*

Chris Lynch/Kris Batelaan

CARRIED.

An updated report on fish and game licence sales was received and conveyed to the Council by the Manager. Licence sales are to date above budget for the Northland region. A report on the accrual of hours for staff to 31st July 2016 was circulated to all Councillors. It was noted that the Manager's time in lieu and annual leave hours were increasing due to extenuating circumstances.

Executive Limitations Report

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

Darryl Reardon/Dave Nicholson

CARRIED.

General Business

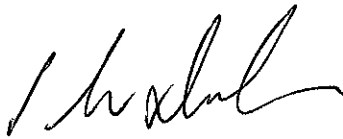
Property Purchase (Fish out Pond and Office)

The Manager presented a power point presentation on a property for sale on the outskirts of Whangarei. This property could provide the Council with a professional facility to teach public awareness of wetlands and freshwater angling to the public.

There are two settling ponds on the property which could be used as fish out ponds if stocked with 2 year old trout.

The Council considered the proposal and wished to readdress this proposal at the next meeting. The Council instructed the Manager to investigate the costs of developing the property before the next Council meeting.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 12.10am.



Phil Durham
Chairman