



# **SPORTS FISH AND GAME MANAGEMENT PLAN 2011**

*To manage, maintain and enhance the sports fish and game bird resource in the recreational interests of anglers and hunters*

Approved by the Minister of Conservation 8<sup>th</sup> August 2011

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## FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

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I am pleased to be able to present the Taranaki sports fish and game management plan.

The preparation of this plan reflects the significant responsibility that is entrusted to the Taranaki Fish and Game Council to prepare a management plan for sports fish and game birds and their habitat in this region and for the provision of quality angling and hunting opportunities for licence holders without impacting unduly on other users of sports fish and game bird habitats. Its preparation has involved extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

It is likely that management issues will change in the years to come as new information and new challenges are presented. The changing attitudes and methods used within the angling and hunting community and by other users of the habitats concerned may require this plan to be amended or reviewed. Therefore it should not be regarded as a static snap-shot from one point-in-time but a living and evolving document, designed for meeting and addressing changing requirements.

The Taranaki Fish and Game Council looks forward to the ongoing input of views from anglers, hunters and other interested groups and users of sports fish and game bird habitat.

Terry Russell  
Chairman

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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The Taranaki Fish and Game Council (the Council) is obliged to manage, maintain and enhance the sports fish and game bird resource in the recreational interests of anglers and hunters in its region. This plan sets out the policies which will guide the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities over the next 10 year period.

In particular, the plan summarises the issues which the Council is obliged to address and the methods it will use to achieve its primary function. The plan also provides summary information on the nature of the sports fish and game bird resource in the region and their relative importance of its subcomponents.

## PART ONE

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### THIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

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1.1.1 Section 26Q(1)(e)(iii) of the Conservation Act 1987 (“The Act”) requires each regional Fish and Game Council to prepare a sports fish and game bird management plan. In accord with Section 17L(4) of the Act, the Council should have regard to:

- the sustainability of sports fish and game birds in its fish and game region.
- the impact that the management of fish and game bird resources will have on other resources and users of the environment.
- provisions which maximise recreational opportunities for anglers and hunters.

1.1.2 It is also intended that the goals and objectives set out in this plan will allow the Council to meet its statutory requirements under Section 17L(3) of the Act also requires that nothing in this plan “shall derogate from”:

- any provision of the Act or any other Act.
- any policy approved under the Act or any other Act in respect of the region.
- any provision in any conservation management strategy or conservation management plan or freshwater fisheries management plan.

1.1.3 The overall intent however, is to produce a plan that addresses the management of fish and game resources within the region while taking into consideration the reasonable views of all stakeholders. In this context, there are essentially four target audiences:

1. The Councillors and staff of the regional Fish and Game Council who will use the plan to direct the management of sports fish and game bird resources and their recreational use in the Taranaki region.
2. Statutory authorities such as the local authorities and central government agencies in the region that have regard to this plan once approved and recognise the priorities and intentions set out in the plan.
3. Sports fish and game bird hunting licence holders.
4. Other user groups of sports fish and game bird habitats.

1.1.4 This plan sets out to improve fish and game management in the Taranaki region by:

- Involving stakeholders in the management process.
- reducing conflict among user groups.
- improving the methods used in fish and game management efforts.
- improving communication over fish and game management.
- maximising angling and hunting opportunity in the region.

1.1.5 The plan promotes goals and objectives, but does not give specific detail about outputs or implementation. More specific projects will come from the Council's Annual Operational Work Plan and other specific implementation policies and plans developed, reviewed and approved by the Council at meetings to achieve the goals

and requirements of the Council. These policies and plans will not be inconsistent with this plan or each other.

1.1.6 Prior to submitting a draft of this management plan for approval by the Minister of Conservation, this plan has been prepared and notified according to the requirements of subsection (2) of Section 17M of the Act to:

- newspapers circulating within the region:
  - The Taranaki Daily News.
  - North Taranaki Midweek
  - Ruapehu Bulletin.
  - South Taranaki Star.
  - Stratford Press.
  - Wanganui Chronicle.
- the Director-General of Conservation, through the Tongariro-Whanganui-Taranaki Conservator.
- Iwi Authorities, including:
  - Ngati Rangi
  - Uenuku Iwi
  - Ngati Tama.
  - Ngati Mutunga.
  - Ngati Maru.
  - Te Ati Awa.
  - Taranaki Iwi Trust.
  - Ngati Haua.
  - Nga Ruahine.
  - Ngati Ruanui.
  - Nga Ruaru.
  - Te Ati Hau.
  - Ngati Apa.
- the New Plymouth, South Taranaki, Stratford, Wanganui and Ruapehu District Councils, Taranaki and Horizons Regional Councils.
- Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board.
- Angling and hunting organisations, and landowner and public interest groups such as New Zealand Deerstalkers Association, Federated Farmers and the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society.

1.1.7 The Plan is divided into five parts. Part One introduces the Plan, Part Two sets out the goals, objectives and outputs, Part Three describes the processes and responsibilities, Part Four provides an overview of the region's resources and Part Five contains supportive material.

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## INTRODUCTION

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1.2.1 The Taranaki Fish and Game Region (the Region) is one of twelve Fish and Game Regions in New Zealand.

1.2.2 In 1990 the management of New Zealand's sports fish and game bird resources was restructured by an amendment to the Conservation Act 1987. The former Acclimatisation Societies were replaced by twelve Regional Councils and one National Council. Each of these Councils became Crown Entities and then Public Entities with the passing of the Crown Entities Act 2004. They have specific functions, responsibilities and powers to manage sports fish and game birds, as specified in Sections 26Q, 26R, and 26S of the Act.

1.2.3 'Fish and Game New Zealand' is the operating name of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council (the New Zealand Council) together with the 12 regional Fish and Game Councils established to represent the interests of anglers and hunters. Fish and Game Councils are the statutory managers of sports fish and game bird resources and their sustainable recreational use by anglers and hunters New Zealand wide. The only exceptions are for the sports fisheries in the Lake Taupo catchment, where that trout fishery is managed by the Department of Conservation and similarly for game birds in the Chatham Islands.

1.2.4 The sports fish and game bird resource and income arising from it are the property of the Crown. Fish and Game Councils are empowered to administer these resources on the Crown's behalf.

1.2.5 The Council receives no government funding to undertake its statutory purpose and its activity is financed solely through the sale of sports fish and game bird licences. Anglers and hunters purchase licences to fish or hunt and in return have input to the sports fish and game bird management in their region. Councillors are anglers and/or hunters elected through a democratic process by whole season licence holders.

1.2.6 The main purpose of the Council, as set out in Section 26Q(1) of the Act is to:

*"Manage, maintain and enhance the sports fish and game resource in the recreational interests of anglers and hunters."*

1.2.7 In fulfilling this purpose under Section 26Q of the Act, the primary functions of the Council are to:

- assess and monitor sports fish and game bird populations, habitats and harvests.
- assess and monitor angler and hunter satisfaction.
- maintain and improve the sports fish and game bird resource.
- provide information and promote angling and hunting.
- represent the interests of anglers and hunters in the statutory planning process.

1.2.8 The Region is enclosed by a line starting at the Turakina River mouth, extending generally northwestwards around the coastline past Wanganui, Hawera and New Plymouth up to the Mokau River mouth, then extending inland generally southeastwards along the Heao-Ohura watershed to intersect the Whanganui River near Kirikau, then around and including the Retaruke watershed to National Park and across the Mount Ruapehu summit to the Desert Road, then extending generally southwestwards excluding Waiouru and Taihape along the Turakina-Rangitikei watershed boundary and back to the Turakina River mouth. The Region includes the towns of Wanganui, Waverley, Patea, Hawera, Opunake, Stratford, Inglewood, Oakura, New Plymouth, Waitara, Whangamomona, Raetihi, and Ohakune. It excludes the Whanganui River headwaters upstream from and including the Ohura River confluence.



## PART TWO

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### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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2.1.1 The objectives presented in this plan have been developed around the two goals that reflect the general mission of the Council, derived from the statutory purpose outlined in the previous section.

1. Manage, maintain and enhance the sports fish and game resource.
2. Maximise recreational angling and hunting opportunity.

2.1.2 Critical to the development of this plan and its subsequent implementation are overarching themes of communication and education, which are intertwined with the two goals. The objectives associated with each goal are not prioritised, but managing, maintaining and enhancing the resource must take priority over maximising recreational angling and hunting opportunity considerations, if conflicts occur.

2.1.3 In promoting these two goals, the Conservation Act also requires sports fish and game bird management plans to have regard to the impact that the management proposed is likely to have on other natural resources and other users of the habitat concerned.

#### **GOAL 1: MANAGE, MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE SPORTS FISH AND GAME RESOURCE**

2.1.4 Most species management in the Region is undertaken through habitat protection. While many species are monitored, there is limited direct intervention to increase the numbers of fish and game species.

2.1.5 Hatchery liberations were previously the main fisheries management tool used in New Zealand. In most aquatic systems, the amount of habitat available for adult fish limits population levels. However, in specific cases, spawning or juvenile rearing habitat may be inadequate to support optimal levels of sports fish for angling. In these cases, liberations of hatchery reared stock may be required. For example, Taranaki has a number of small lakes (e.g. Lakes Ngangana, Rotomanu, Ratapiko, Opunake, Namunamu and Rokes Dam) that lack suitable spawning tributaries. This means that their trout populations are largely unable to sustain themselves at viable levels through natural recruitment. In order to maximise angler opportunity sports fish populations may also need to be enhanced through supplementary stocking. For example, the stocking of rainbow trout into the Waingongoro River, Kaupokonui Stream and Lake Managamahoe has been undertaken to provide additional angling opportunities to that provided by their resident populations of brown trout.

2.1.6 The Council has an established trout stocking programme utilising fish raised at its Hawera hatchery from Lake Tarawera-strain rainbow trout ova and Lake Rotorua-strain brown trout ova received from the Eastern Fish and Game Region. The Council also purchases or receives donated surplus two-year-old trout from the Eastern Fish and Game Region's Ngongotaha and DOC Turangi hatcheries. These two-year-old fish are released in conjunction with Kids Fish Out Days held across the region, to promote sports fishing to children and their families.

2.1.7 Supplementary stocking in appropriate habitats enables the Council to enhance the angling experience and to provide a range of angling opportunities. Liberations of tagged sports fish may also be used to monitor a certain fishery. Returns of tagged sports fish provide important information which will support the fisheries management decision process. Liberations that are for monitoring purposes will only generally involve relatively small numbers of fish.

2.1.8 In managing habitat, maintaining it is more effective than trying to restore it after it is damaged or destroyed. The Council recognises the direct relationship between the abundance of sports fish and game bird species and the quality and quantity of habitat available to them through the course of their life cycle. Populations of the region's sports fish and game bird species are generally sufficiently well established to sustain a recreational harvest. This means it is possible to manage populations through the management of habitat, the species themselves and the extent of the recreational harvest.

2.1.9 There are waters without trout, and where these waters have indigenous biodiversity values that would benefit from the exclusion of trout, this Council will not seek the release or establishment of trout in these waters. Further, where the Department of Conservation identifies areas for specific conservation management of rare species, then the Council's management of trout in those areas will not frustrate the needs of that management.

2.1.10 Key objectives for sports fish and game bird management are to:

- a. Maintain sustainable populations of harvestable sports fish and game bird species.
- b. Protect, increase and enhance habitat for sports fish and game birds.
- c. Ensure a sustainable harvest of the resource by enforcing fishing and hunting regulations.
- d. Sustain and enhance regional sports fish populations where required by liberating hatchery reared fish.
- e. Have regard to the effects of fish and game management activities on other natural resources and resource users.

## **GOAL 2: MAXIMISE RECREATIONAL ANGLING AND HUNTING OPPORTUNITY**

2.1.11 Managing recreational opportunity is merely an element of the broader sphere of sports fish and game bird management. Anglers and hunters comprise a diverse group with a broad spectrum of experience, skill, leisure time, financial means and fishing or hunting preferences. In attempting to maximise their fishing and hunting opportunity, the Council is required to have regard to the impacts of its management on other natural resources and other users of the resource.

2.1.12 Key objectives for maximising recreational angling and hunting opportunity are to:

- a. Encourage maximum angler and hunter participation, access to the fishing and hunting resource and maintain the quality of the recreational experience.
- b. Gain and maintain acceptance of the recreations of sports fishing and game bird hunting in the wider community.
- c. Maximise the sale of angling and hunting licences in the region.

- d. Provide for the governance of the fish and game system by sports fish and game bird hunting licence holders.
- e. Ensure the planned and coordinated management of the sports fish and game bird resource.
- f. Maintain liaison with those landowners/resource managers who provide sports fish and game bird habitat and/or angling and hunting opportunities.

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## **POLICY AND METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

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2.2.1 The objectives listed above will be achieved through the Council's annual operational work plans (OWP). The structure of this section of the Management Plan follows the eight functional areas (output classes) used in Fish and Game Regional OWP's. These output classes are used for management purposes in all fish and game regions and at a national level.

### **OUTPUT CLASS 1: SPECIES**

2.2.2 The Council manages a range of sports fish and game bird species within the Taranaki region. Management programmes are required for these species to ensure that populations remain healthy and to ensure that there is sufficient annual surplus to enable sustainable harvest by anglers and hunters. The availability of sports fish and game birds is the most fundamental component of angling and hunting making it a core activity for the Council.

2.2.3 Monitoring of populations and their trends over time and maintaining this information in up to date databases is critical. Sports fish monitoring techniques include drift dive surveys, spawning surveys, electro-fishing and angler surveys. Game monitoring techniques include annual aerial counts, moult counts, brood counts, annual harvest surveys and hunter surveys. Funding of species-specific research is also an important management tool. Collection of baseline data must be maintained, but reviewed from time to time and changes to programmes and monitoring techniques made as and when required. Supplementation and enhancement of sports fish populations with hatchery reared fish may be undertaken where local populations cannot be sustained through natural recruitment.

*Objective: To maintain sustainable populations of harvestable sports fish and game bird species.*

*Achievement of this objective requires:*

- *Assessing and monitoring populations of sports fish and game bird species.*
- *Assessing and monitoring harvest levels.*
- *Setting and enforcing regulations for sustainable harvests.*
- *Mitigating any adverse impacts on sports fish and game bird species.*
- *Mitigating the impact of sports fish and game bird species on other species, habitat and users of that habitat.*
- *Liberating hatchery reared sports fish to enhance angling opportunities, including where local populations are incapable of being maintained at optimal levels through natural recruitment and where this will not compromise existing significant native fish biodiversity values.*
- *Liberating hatchery reared sports fish for monitoring purposes in areas where this will not result in significant adverse effects on existing wild sports fish populations.*

- *Recognising that aviation safety in the vicinity of airports is paramount and care must be taken to ensure that hunter interests do not compromise such.*

**Issues:**

- Without sustainable management of sports fish and game birds these resources will become depleted and therefore less available for sustainable harvest.
- Without information about the status and trends of sports fish and game bird populations, good management decisions cannot be made.
- Without monitoring information, involvement in Resource Management Act 1991 processes may not be effective.
- Monitoring must be cost-effective and produce useful and useable information.
- Future information requirements may be difficult to identify.
- It would not be in the long term interests of recreational hunting to allow gamebird management to compromise aviation safety in the vicinity of airports.

**OUTPUT CLASS 2: HABITAT PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT**

2.2.4 There is a direct relationship between the abundance of sports fish and game birds and the quality and quantity of habitat available to them. Natural habitat is for all practical purposes finite in nature and changes to elements of it are often sought by other uses and users.

2.2.5 Intensification of agriculture, discharges to waterways, damage to riparian margins, surface water abstraction, vegetation clearance, wetland drainage and river control works have all had a negative impact on sports fish and game bird habitats within the region. Development activities continue to reduce the quality and quantity of available habitat and water.

2.2.6 The long term effects of the introduced alga, *Didymosphenia geminata* (Didymo) on the aquatic ecosystem and sports fishery is unknown and remains a major concern. It is envisaged that Fish and Game Councils will play a substantial role in the management and control of this and similar invasive organisms in freshwater environments as well as any ongoing research of their effects on the environment.

2.2.7 Habitat protection is the specific responsibility of local authorities (Resource Management Act 1991) and the Department of Conservation (Conservation Act 1987). The Council will continue to seek and support the implementation of these statutory responsibilities and encourage other habitat users to accept responsibility for avoiding, remedying or mitigating their adverse environmental effects.

2.2.8 Non-statutory processes may also be used to achieve the protection of sports fish and game bird habitat. Proactive cooperation with other resource management organisations, land owners and managers, Iwi Authorities, interest groups and individuals in the wider community can be used to realise positive outcomes for fish and game management.

2.2.9 Habitat maintenance and enhancement is an important tool in the management of the sports fish and game bird resource. Ensuring that sufficient habitat is available to maintain self-sustaining populations of sports fish and game

birds and angling and hunting opportunities has become a major activity for the Council in recent years.

*Objective: To protect and increase suitable habitat for sports fish and game bird species.*

*Achievement of this objective requires:*

- *Assessing and monitoring the condition and trend of sports fish and game bird habitat in the region using available information (such as the Taranaki and Horizons Regional Council State of the Environment Monitoring Programmes).*
- *Advocating for the protection and increase of sports fish and game bird habitats through statutory planning and non-statutory processes.*
- *Advocating for the exclusion, eradication or effective management of risks posed by pests and diseases to sports fish and game bird habitats.*
- *Managing, maintaining and enhancing sports fish and game bird habitats owned, managed or supported by the Council.*
- *Continuing to raise awareness of the threat to regional waterways by *Didymo* and other invasive freshwater organisms and promote the Check, Clean, Dry message.*
- *Collaborating and participating with other agencies in multi goal habitat projects.*

**Issues:**

1. Modification of rivers and streams has adversely affected game bird and sports fish habitat and angling and hunting values.
2. Decisions made by other statutory bodies, such as environmental flow setting, may sometimes have detrimental effects on sports fish and game bird habitat.
3. There has been extensive loss of wetlands, game bird habitat and hunting opportunities through land development and land use changes in the region.
4. Management of sports fish and game bird habitat on private land is difficult.
5. Government policies seeking an increase renewable energy are continuing to put pressure on riverine ecosystems due to hydro-electric power applications, which divert Council resources from fisheries, wildlife and recreational management.
6. Intensification of agriculture, discharges to water, damage to riparian margins, surface water abstraction, vegetation clearance, wetland drainage and river control works have all had a negative impact on sports fish and game bird habitat in the region.
7. Development activities continue to reduce the quality and quantity of available habitat and water.
8. The long term effects of the introduced alga, *Didymosphenia geminata*, on the aquatic ecosystem are unknown and remain a major concern should it become established in the region.
9. New biosecurity threats arise from time to time and freshwater interests need to be continually vigilant to protect freshwaters generally.

### **OUTPUT CLASS 3: PARTICIPATION**

2.2.10 The Council has a statutory requirement to promote recreation based on sports fish and game bird resources. The Council is also responsible to hunters and anglers to provide information on where to hunt and fish and therefore assist them

gain access to resources. With its revenue base for all its activities dependent on licence sales, it is in the Council's interest to encourage potential anglers and hunters to take up these recreational activities. It is equally important that current anglers and hunters enjoy and can afford these activities and any factors that may limit participation are minimised. At the same time the Council must also ensure that increased use of the sports fish and game bird resource does not compromise their sustainability or the quality of the recreation experience.

2.2.11 Protection of the quality of the angling experience, which in some areas includes feelings of solitude, remoteness and appreciation of natural surroundings and high water quality, must remain a priority for the Council. Too much angling pressure can diminish the perceived value of some of the Region's fisheries. Similar pressures have not yet had a major impact on hunting, but this may well occur if the reputation of New Zealand as an outstanding hunting destination continues to grow.

2.2.12 The maintenance of a positive and mutually supportive relationship with licence holders, including prospective, present and past participants, is vital for the ongoing success of the Council to enable anglers and hunters to maximise opportunities within the Region.

2.2.13 The availability of access to sports fishing and game bird hunting has been identified as a significant factor in limiting participation. This is especially important for public land. Maintenance and enhancement of access opportunities to the region's sports fish and game bird resource is a key responsibility for the Council.

2.2.14 Legal and physical access to water and land for angling and hunting is an issue in some parts of the Region but it is also important that licence holders are aware of the opportunities that already exist. Anglers and hunters need to be informed of the areas open to them, how to reach these areas, and where public access points are located. Signposting of significant angling and hunting access points enables licence holders to easily identify and take advantage of available opportunities. For example the Council will endeavour to work with local authorities to provide signage of trout streams and lakes within the region.

2.2.15 In addition to its statutory requirement to promote recreation based on sports fish and game bird resources, the Council also has a role in the promotion of ethical standards of behaviour of both hunters and anglers alike in the form of a Code of Conduct.

2.2.16 The Code of Conduct should promote ethical standards of behaviour including:

- a. respect for sports fish and game birds before, during and after harvesting as a wild food resource.
- b. a desire to have others enjoy their hunting and angling opportunities as much as you.
- c. acknowledgment that anglers and hunters often have no audience to ensure they behave ethically and that such behaviour is self motivated and self regulated.
- d. an individual concern for the well-being of the environment and for others also interested in and using that environment.
- e. promotion of uses which preserve the diversity, integrity, and beauty of ecosystems and disapproval of those which do not.
- f. an acceptance that the health of the sports fish and game resource should not be measured by production of game birds and fish alone, but also by

its ability to provide intangible values such as an appreciation of the wilderness, rivers, lakes and wetlands.

*Objective: To encourage maximum angler and hunter participation while maintaining the quality of the recreational experience.*

*Achievement of this objective requires:*

- *Assessing the success rate and degree of satisfaction of users of the sports fish and game bird resource.*
- *Maintaining and improving angler and hunter access to the resource.*
- *Providing and supporting opportunities for new anglers and hunters to receive training and to participate in sports fishing and game bird hunting.*
- *Publicising matters of interest to licence holders and other users of sports fish and game bird habitats.*
- *Defining and promoting ethical standards of behaviour to be followed by anglers and hunters.*
- *Collaborating with other agencies.*

**Issues:**

1. There is increasing competition for recreational time and money.
2. Young anglers and hunters are an important market and are the future of the sports. They may require assistance to learn about sports fishing and game bird hunting.
3. Anglers and hunters require regular updated information on the sports fish and game bird resources and the recreational opportunities available within the constraint of maintaining the resource quality.
4. Restrictions on legal access to fishing and hunting opportunities may lead to the creation of exclusive rights to sports fish and game bird populations.
5. Where legal access is available, physical access may be impeded by vegetation or lack of tracks.
6. Undesirable angler or hunter behaviour may lead to access restrictions.

#### **OUTPUT CLASS 4: PUBLIC AWARENESS**

2.2.17 The protection of sports fish and game birds and their habitat is dependent on the support of Government, local authorities and the wider community. This requires community appreciation and support for the Fish and Game system.

2.2.18 Management responsibility of the sports fish and game bird resource involves relationships with many other stakeholders, including statutory organisations, Iwi, interest groups and community members. The level of support from these other stakeholders impacts upon the Council's capacity to successfully achieve its purpose and functions. To be effective and ensure acceptability of Fish and Game activities, the Council needs to create a high public awareness of its role and activities, and the contribution it makes to environmental enhancement.

2.2.19 Fish and Game, like other recreational based organisations, is entering a future that involves changing demographics, changing land ownership practices (an increase in overseas, corporate and life-style owners), increasing commercialisation of recreation, and changing attitudes of a growing urban population to practices within the rural sector.

*Objective: To gain and maintain acceptance of the recreations of sports fishing and game bird hunting in the wider community.*

*Achievement of this objective requires:*

- *Having regard to other users of the sports fish and game bird habitat.*
  - *Promoting recreation based on sports fish and game birds, including involvement in educational programmes encouraging participation.*
  - *Liaising with:*
    - *land owners or land managers.*
    - *local Conservation Board and other statutory authorities.*
    - *local Iwi on matters of potential common interest.*
    - *angler and hunter clubs and other environmental interest groups.*
- media, politicians and wider public and respond to approaches from them on Fish and Game activities and views of current issues.*

***Issues:***

1. There is relatively low public awareness of the Council's role in sports fish and game bird management, conservation work and environmental enhancement.
2. There is relatively low public awareness of the importance of many ecosystems and habitats and the degraded state of some of these within the region.
3. The functions and goals of other organisations may affect the interests of the Council and vice versa.
4. Lack of consultation may result in unnecessary conflict or missed opportunities.

## **OUTPUT CLASS 5: COMPLIANCE**

2.2.20 Maintaining compliance with the region's fishing and hunting regulations is important to ensure that all anglers and hunters contribute to the costs of fish and game management by purchasing a licence and adhering to the method restrictions, season lengths and bag limits which ensure the sustainable management of the sports fish and game resource.

2.2.21 Illegal activities are not condoned by licence holders. Increasing numbers of anglers, hunters and members of the community, report illegal activities to Taranaki Fish and Game councillors and staff. One of the greatest strengths of the Fish and Game system is the ability for users of the resource to self-police their own system.

2.2.22 The size of the Region and the isolated nature of many of the fishing and hunting areas mean that significant coverage by staff alone is impossible. Honorary rangers make a large and significant contribution to enforcement and compliance efforts in the region. Rangers are warranted by the Chief Executive of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council and trained and administered by the Council. They are often the front line contact between licence holders and Fish and Game.

2.2.23 It is important that the Council effectively encourages reporting of offences and makes use of the assistance of licence holders and the general public to achieve a high level of compliance.

*Objective: To ensure a sustainable harvest of the resource by enforcing fishing and hunting regulations.*

*Achievement of this objective requires:*

- *Ensuring that there are sufficient resources to enforce fishing and hunting regulations.*
- *Ensuring licence holders and the community are aware of the need for compliance with sports fish and game bird regulations.*
- *Achieving an annual 10% coverage of regional licence holders and seeking a 95% rate of compliance from those licence holders checked.*
- *Undertaking legal action for breaches of regulations and seeking publicity of these as a deterrent to others.*
- *Recording and monitoring all offences, seizures and court verdicts and maintaining a ranger register and training programmes.*

**Issues:**

1. Often members of the community are not aware of the purpose or need for fishing and hunting regulations.
2. Poaching and non-compliance can threaten the sustainability of the sports fish and game bird resource.
3. Spawning streams and game bird moulting and feeding sites are particularly susceptible to poaching activities, game bird poisoning and illegal culls.

**OUTPUT CLASS 6: LICENCING**

2.2.24 The sale of fishing and hunting licences provides the core revenue for Fish and Game Regions. Licences purchased in the Region are able to be used nationwide, apart from sports fishing in the Taupo Fishing District.

2.2.25 Part of the Council's commitment to improve the services offered to licence holders is to ensure that anglers and hunters can easily purchase a licence. The sale of licences through retail outlets remains the most popular means for anglers and hunters to purchase a licence. However, in recent times, implementation of electronic databases and the internet have meant licences can now also be purchased online or over the phone from home outside work hours.

*Objective: To maximise the sale of angling and hunting licences in the Region.*

*Achievement of this objective requires:*

- *Ensuring licences are readily available for purchase.*
- *Maintaining an effective and efficient relationship with the licence administrator, agent and purchaser.*

**Issues:**

1. The ease of purchasing a licence often determines the willingness to do so.
2. The licence categories do not necessarily meet the requirements of all anglers and hunters.

**OUTPUT CLASS 7: COUNCIL**

2.2.26 Licence holder ownership of fish and game management and involvement is based upon an elected Council system. The Council is made up of not more than 12 members elected for a three year term. The Council is required to meet at least six times each year. The Council is subject to the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. All Council meetings are therefore publicly notified and open to licence holders and interested parties to attend. The Council's role, according to the Governance Procedures of Fish and Game Councils generally, is to approve

regulations and budgets, set policies and appoint staff for the administration of the Fish and Game resource within its region.

2.2.27 Each Fish and Game Council appoints a regional manager or chief executive and other staff for the efficient and economic administration of the affairs of the Council. Preparation of agendas, meeting reports and minutes are part of the manager and staff's requirement to the Council. These papers associated with meetings are available to licence holders and the general public. Any organisation or individual may contact the Council for consideration of agenda items for discussion at meetings.

*Objective: To provide for the governance of the fish and game system by fish and game licence holders.*

*Achievement of this objective requires:*

- *Providing for the administration and effective operation of the Council.*

**Issues:**

1. The Council needs to be effectively serviced to carry out its governance role.

## **OUTPUT CLASS 8: PLANNING AND REPORTING**

2.2.28 The Council requires planning and reporting systems that enable it to establish and maintain clear direction and to provide accountability to licence holders. The Council is expected to show competence and compliance with public sector guidelines and reporting requirements.

2.2.29 In addition to standard business planning practices the Conservation Act 1987 places a number of statutory requirements on Fish and Game Councils. The responsibilities to be met by the Council include:

- a. Preparation of a Sports Fish and Game Management Plan. The plan is to set out the ways a Council will manage the fish and game resource for the following 10 years within its region.
- b. Approval of an Operational Work Plan. The Operational Work Plan (OWP) describes projects to be completed for the year, staff time and costs involved and budgetary requirements. The OWP should consider and, where appropriate, address the objectives defined in the Management Plan.
- c. Preparation of an Annual Report, including a Statement of Service Performance, which is a reflection of the extent to which the OWP has been achieved for the financial year. This annual report is presented to the Minister of Conservation to lay before Parliament as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year (Section 26X of the Act). It documents activities undertaken for the year and the degree to which objectives are being met by the Council.
- d. The financial statement is to be audited by the Office of the Auditor General or its agent.

2.2.30 The Council must also prepare each annual Angler's and Game Notice which regulates sports fishing and game bird hunting in the region. These notices set out the conditions under which a current licence holder may fish or hunt in the region. Each notice sets any bag limits for each species and season lengths plus any restrictions on methods and hours of angling or hunting.

2.2.31 An important aspect of effectively managing fish and game throughout New Zealand is liaison with other regional Fish and Game Councils and the New Zealand Council. Fish and Game Regions can work cooperatively to improve the management of the resource. Opportunities also exist for Councils to work collectively on nationally important issues. Each Council appoints one of its members to the New Zealand Council to achieve the New Zealand Council's functions to advocate the national requirements of Fish and Game New Zealand and coordinate regional functions.

2.2.32 It is necessary for Councils to co-operate to ensure that the most effective use is made of every licence dollar. It is also necessary for the system to achieve excellence in fish and game management and services to anglers and hunters.

*Objective: To ensure the planned and coordinated management of the sports fish and game resource.*

*Achievement of this objective requires:*

- *Preparing and adopting:*
  - *a Sports Fish and Game Management Plan.*
  - *an annual operational work plan.*
  - *an annual report, including a Statement of Service Performance.*
- *Implementing national policy determined by the New Zealand Fish and Game Council.*
- *Identifying and recommending to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council the region's sports fish and game requirements for research.*
- *Liaising and coordinating activity with the New Zealand Fish and Game Council and other Fish and Game regions.*

**Issues:**

1. Without capable planning, management of the fish and game resource in the region will not be cost effective.
2. Some issues cannot be effectively dealt with in isolation from other Fish and Game regions.

## **PART THREE**

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### **ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

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3.1.1 The Fish and Game management system is based on twelve regional Councils coordinated by the New Zealand Council. With inter-availability of fishing and hunting between regions, funding of all thirteen Councils is linked through a national budget system which includes the setting of levies and payment of grants to redistribute revenue between all 13 Councils. This means all Councils must operate within the financial and human resources available to them. Therefore resources will be allocated according to priorities established annually and will be affected by national priorities.

3.1.2 The resources Fish and Game New Zealand administers are managed by each Fish and Game Council for all New Zealanders. When buying a licence, the licence purchaser is contributing to the management of the resource nationwide – not only in a particular region. This plan, however, is directed entirely at the medium to long term management of the Taranaki Fish and Game Region, within the context of the legislation and Fish and Game national policy.

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### **PLANNING AND PROCESSES**

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3.2.1 An important feature of the changes brought in by the Conservation Act was to ensure that the public have a say in how resources are managed. The emphasis is on public input, not just input by licence holders alone. One of the basic reasons behind requiring Fish and Game Councils to prepare Sports Fish and Game Management Plans is to ensure that decision-making is in accordance with policies approved through a public consultation process.

3.2.2 Decisions by Fish and Game Councils can be challenged by the Ombudsman or by judicial review. The development and acceptance of a management plan provides a framework upon which decisions can be reached. This enables consistency in decision making.

3.2.3 Apart from the Annual General Meeting (AGM), there are other times when public input into fish and game decisions can occur. The setting of angling and hunting regulations can often become a two-way process with anglers and hunters giving their views and the Council providing some of the background information on the state of the resource and the reasons behind the decisions. Taranaki Fish and Game Council meetings are public meetings. A time for public comment can be set aside during a meeting to allow people to speak on particular matters. Councillors and staff can be approached by licence holders or members of the public seeking consideration of their views on particular topics.

3.2.4 It is the Council's practice to invite participation in decision making with affected parties. In addition, all Council meetings are publicly advertised with time set aside for public input or included in a meeting agenda if requested. In addition, the Council is obliged each year to produce and circulate an annual report which is presented to interested parties at an AGM.

## **NON-STATUTORY PROCESSES**

3.2.5 Proactive cooperation with other resource management organisations, Iwi, interest groups and the wider community will be used to realise outcomes for sports fish and game bird management. It is also recognised that anglers and hunters make major contributions to habitat protection and enhancement work.

3.2.6 The majority of all sports fish and game bird habitat is on, adjacent to, or passes through, private land. It is important for the Council to encourage land owners and managers to create, maintain and enhance sports fish and game bird habitats on their land. Many freshwater habitats are dynamic environments and respond rapidly to change. Wetlands, for example, can be created following gravel extraction and within 5 years after their creation can be providing important wildlife and/or fisheries habitat.

3.2.7 The Council provides advice and assistance to landowners on wetland, upland game and fisheries habitat on request. It will actively seek to encourage the protection and enhancement of freshwater habitats for sports fish and game birds on private and public land. Advice on habitat protection or restoration will be provided to landowners most effectively in conjunction with funds sourced externally for biodiversity protection purposes. The Council will seek support in the provision of advice wherever and whenever this is available. Where resources are required to undertake habitat enhancement, the Council will seek external funds to assist if appropriate.

## **FORMAL STATUTORY PLANNING PROCESS**

3.2.8 Taranaki Fish and Game Council will provide for and recognise the Council's, and the New Zealand Council's, interests in all appropriate statutory planning matters. This will involve:

- a. consultation under the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act with the appropriate local authorities on all relevant planning documents.
- b. submissions in resource and other consent processes to advocate for decisions and conditions that promote sports fish and game bird interests and the interests of anglers and hunters.
- c. solutions of remediation or mitigation, where adverse effects of activities on sports fish and game bird habitat or recreational values cannot be avoided.
- d. development of effective protocols with resource management authorities to manage key environmental impacts.
- e. liaison with the Department of Conservation and Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board on their planning processes as required.

## **OPERATIONAL WORK PLANS**

3.2.9 Operational work plans (OWPs) are prepared annually. If there is no sports fish and game management plan in force for the region, the Minister of Conservation approves OWP's or provisions in them relating to the management of those species of sports fish or game bird for the region in which there is no management plan in force. OWP's set out the projects/work to be undertaken and money available for the coming financial year and must give effect to the policies contained in an approved sports fish and game management plan.

3.2.10 The Council begins to draft its OWP around February each year. Although there is no statutory requirement to do so or formal process undertaken, an important part of this process is responding to public/licence holder inputs through the political process in the development of priorities for the year. Once a draft plan has been completed it becomes part of the national budget round in May/June. Usually the OWPs of the regions are reviewed for consistency at meetings of regional managers and their recommendations are considered by the New Zealand Council. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the New Zealand Council, following consultation with the regions, to recommend to the Minister of Conservation a licence fee based on the cost of carrying out essential operating functions nationwide for that year. This means that in any one year there may be some projects that have to be cut from regional work plans. However, once the licence fee has been set in early July, each region can finalise its annual OWP ready for the start of the new financial year in September. In developing its priorities and projects, the Council will continue to be mindful of any operative minimum operating standards or national policy developed for Fish and Game Councils by the New Zealand Council.

3.2.11 Taranaki Fish and Game Council's OWP will detail the outputs and activities necessary to implement the goals and objectives of this management plan as determined each year by the Council.

### **FISHING AND HUNTING REGULATIONS**

3.2.12 Many anglers and hunters at times pursue their sport in regions other than where they purchase a licence. With nationwide licences, the rules and regulations should be as similar as possible across all regions, or at least framed on a common basis, where practical.

3.2.13 Although some regulations are nationally applicable, the legislation is set up to provide for regional management and regional regulation through Game and Angler's Notices, published annually in the NZ Gazette. The main purpose of the regulations is to ensure sustainability of the resource and equitable access to it by anglers and hunters. Fundamental to the Council's responsibility to promote angling and hunting is the avoidance of regulations, which may advance elitism or provide for exclusive use of the resource. It is especially important for newcomers to angling and hunting that regulations do not unnecessarily constrain the way they wish to pursue their chosen sport. In particular, the Council takes the view that most regulations should be intended to maximise fishing and hunting opportunities. Restrictions should generally only exist for biological reasons and to ensure that sports fishing and game bird hunting remain as sporting activities, available to all who purchase the appropriate licence.

3.2.14 Taranaki Fish and Game Council will draft and approve regional regulations which:

- a. manage angler and hunter harvest at levels which the resource can sustain.
- b. maximise participation and opportunities for success, while providing a range of fishing and hunting opportunities.
- c. encourage ethical behaviour.
- d. enable all licence-holders fair and equitable access to the resource.

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## **CROSS BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT**

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3.3.1 Fish and Game management in a region will have impacts beyond its boundary. Therefore, in meeting its responsibilities, the Council will consider the interests of all fish and game users and those of the wider community.

3.3.2 From an administrative point of view, the Council and its staff interact with a number of agencies in managing sports fish and game birds and their habitats. The obvious, and perhaps most critical of these, are the wider Fish and Game organisation, the Department of Conservation and Regional and District Councils.

### **NEW ZEALAND FISH AND GAME COUNCIL**

3.3.3 The New Zealand Fish and Game Council (the New Zealand Council) was established under Section 26B of the Conservation Act 1987 to represent nationally the interests of anglers and hunters and provide coordination of the management, enhancement and maintenance of the sports fish and game bird resource. The key functions of the New Zealand Council relevant to this plan are:

- a. to develop national policies in consultation with regional Fish and Game Councils. It is important that regional objectives and policies are not inconsistent with national policies and any national strategic direction.
- b. to audit the activities of Fish and Game Councils.
- c. to collect and redistribute financial resources nationally via an income levy to meet the statutory responsibilities of the organisation nationally and regionally.
- d. to advocate in any statutory planning process its interests in the management of sports fish and game birds.

3.3.4 Even though the New Zealand Council is a separate body with its own staff, its Councillors are all appointed; one from each of the 12 regional Fish and Game Councils. It is through the New Zealand Council that the organisation as a whole makes decisions. For decisions such as new national policy or setting the cost of fishing or hunting licences or determining research requirements, a formal consultation process ensures that every Council has the opportunity to have a say.

3.3.5 Taranaki Fish and Game Council nominates one of its Councillors to sit on the New Zealand Council. The Director (Chief Executive or CE) of the New Zealand Council participates with fellow regional managers (CEs) in managers' meetings with national office staff. A two-way liaison needs to be maintained at all levels – politically, managerially, technically and administratively.

### **ADJOINING FISH AND GAME COUNCILS (WELLINGTON, AUCKLAND/WAIKATO) AND OTHER NORTH ISLAND COUNCILS**

3.3.6 Political or administrative boundaries are not necessarily the best management units for species populations. Each species tends to lend itself to "geographic management units". For game birds, this means adjoining Councils need to manage species in a consistent and coordinated fashion. For example, migratory species like black swan cross regional boundaries to the south and east respectively. The Region works cooperatively with Wellington Region over the provision of mallard duck and swan trend count data as well as drift diving, ranging/compliance, resource management issues and staff training. Similar cooperation is currently being developed with Auckland/Waikato Region.

## **NEW ZEALAND GAME BIRD HABITAT TRUST BOARD**

3.3.7 The New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust Board (Board) was established under the Conservation Act 1987 primarily to improve New Zealand's game bird habitat and secondarily to improve the habitat of other wildlife. Its main function is to disperse funds by way of grants to any landowner or organisation that satisfies the Board's criteria for the protection, restoration, improvement, creation or procurement of game bird habitat. The income used for this purpose is received from the proceeds of the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Stamp programme administered by the New Zealand Council. The Council actively promotes the fund to land owners and acts as a referee for applications to the Board from this region. As a referee it provides progress reports to the Board and signs off the authorisation that work has been completed for the Board to make its payments to land owners.

## **DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION**

3.3.8 Taranaki Fish and Game Council's relationship with the Department of Conservation involves close liaison between the two agencies with responsibilities under the same legislation – the Conservation and Wildlife Acts and their associated regulations. There is some overlap in functions due to Part 2, Section 6(ab) of the Conservation Act 1987 which gives the Department the task of preserving all indigenous freshwater fisheries and protecting recreational freshwater fisheries and freshwater habitats. This includes freshwater sports fish and their habitats. The Department also has the responsibility under Section 53(3)(d) to 'advocate the protection of (freshwater) aquatic life'.

3.3.9 The Council works very closely with the Department over its management of these resources on the public's behalf and according to the various statutes, where these affect Council interests.

3.3.10 A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed and adopted at a national level between the Director-General and the Chief Executive of the New Zealand Council to guide the working relationship of the two organisations at a national level and specifies some agreed objectives.

3.3.11 The Director-General of the Department of Conservation or his nominee is entitled to attend and speak but not vote at Fish and Game meetings. For the Council, this function is normally performed by a delegate of the Tongariro-Whanganui-Taranaki Conservator.

## **TARANAKI/WHANGANUI CONSERVATION BOARD**

3.3.12 The functions of the Conservation Board are set out in Section 6M of the Conservation Act 1987 and in the National Parks and Reserves Acts. The Conservation Board's focus is on providing advice, planning and strategic direction, but not the day-to-day operational details of the Department of Conservation's work. One of a Conservation Board's specific functions is to liaise with Fish and Game Councils (Section 6M(1)(f) of the Act).

3.3.13 A major responsibility for the Conservation Board is overseeing the conservation management strategy (CMS) for Taranaki/Whanganui. A CMS is a 10-year plan setting out how the Department will manage public conservation lands and waters and species within the respective conservancy. Once a CMS has been approved by the New Zealand Conservation Authority, the Conservation Board

advises on its implementation. As mentioned previously, a Sports Fish and Game Management Plan shall not derogate from a CMS (Section 17L(3)(c) of the Act) therefore it is important that the objectives and policies in this plan are consistent with the relevant CMS.

3.3.14 The Council will maintain regular liaison with the Conservation Boards associated with its region and ensure that each Conservation Board recognises and provides for Fish and Game, angling and hunting interests in the Board's work. The Council will also recognise and provide for Conservation Board interests where these are relevant, particularly in the development of management plans for lands administered by the Department in which Fish and Game, or anglers and hunters, have an interest.

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## **REGIONAL IWI**

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3.4.1 The Region overlaps the rohe of a number of Iwi Authorities including Ngati Tama, Ngati Mutunga, Te Ati Awa, Ngati Maru, Taranaki Iwi, Ngati Haua, Nga Ruahine, Ngati Ruanui, Nga Ruaru, Ngati Rangī, Uenuku Iwi and Ngati Apa.

3.4.2 Both this Council and Iwi, who are intrinsically linked to land and water resources, are frequently engaged in environmental and resource management issues where they share similar, if not identical, concerns.

3.4.3 One such area of concern is the quality of water within the region's rivers, lakes and streams and which is of paramount concern to the Council and local Iwi. Fish and Game Regions have long recognised that agriculture, forestry, industrial and urban development's have all caused water quality within the region to deteriorate. This has had a significant impact on aquatic flora and fauna populations, wild food resources and recreational and amenity values. Fish and Game and Iwi Authorities are both at the forefront in the fight to protect and, where possible, enhance the quality of the water within the Region and prevent it from being polluted, diverted or subject to over allocation.

3.4.4 In line with the preservation of water quality is the desire by Council and Iwi to protect the natural state of the Region's waterways. This includes seeking the removal or modification of dams, weirs and other artificial barriers to ensure the natural and effective migration of native fish and sports fish where they have been prevented from reaching spawning streams and head waters. Unopposed or unmodified these obstructions can have a devastating effect on fish populations.

3.4.5 This Council and Iwi share a deep concern with the diminishing number of wetland areas within the region. These fragile habitats and ecosystems remain at constant threat from agricultural development. Wetlands provide breeding habitat which is critical not only for game birds also but for rare native bird and fish species. Council and Iwi Authorities are but two of a number of organisations that recognise the importance of wetland areas and are working to secure their protection and where possible enhancement.

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## **SECTION 4 RESPONSIBILITY**

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3.5.1 The Treaty of Waitangi establishes a partnership between the Crown and Iwi. Sports fish and game bird resources are managed on behalf of the Crown by Fish and Game Councils.

3.5.2 Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987, states that “this Act shall so be interpreted and administered as to give effect to the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi”. This places a statutory responsibility on the Council to give effect to these principles, unless the principles are clearly inconsistent with the legislation (*Ngai Tahu Maori Trust Board V Director-General of Conservation*, 1995 3 NZLR 553).

3.5.3 Generally speaking, and as identified in previous paragraphs, the Council and Iwi have a common interest in maintaining clean water and protecting the natural character of rivers, lakes and wetlands. Council and Iwi also have a common cause in seeking to manage wild populations of species for sustainable harvest.

3.5.4 Where Council promotes and participates in wetland habitat restoration, protection and enhancement that enables the sustainable harvest of sports fish and game birds for licence holders, it also provides for the sustainable harvest of cultural resources of specific interest to Iwi, such as eels, whitebait and flax.

3.5.5 Consultation between the Council and Iwi should occur on matters of potential common interest to enable informed decisions to be made on areas of joint interest. The Council welcomes approaches from Iwi to work in cooperation to promote shared interests and achieve common goals.

3.5.6 The Council recognises that the Treaty encourages partners to afford each other reasonable cooperation and to act towards each other reasonably and with the utmost good faith. This includes an obligation to consult and have respect for the other’s point of view.

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## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

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3.6.1 This plan is to be reviewed within ten years of receiving Ministerial approval. Amendments within this period can involve the whole or part of this plan.

3.6.2 The implementation of the plan will be reviewed annually and if necessary amended subject to Section 17M of the Conservation Act 1987.

3.6.3 The purpose of monitoring and review is to ensure that the plan is implemented effectively, that the provisions are current and that they best serve the interests of sports fish and game birds, their habitats and the licenced anglers and hunters of the region.

3.6.4 The Council will continuously monitor the implementation of this plan through the annual operational work plan process and review it as necessary, with a complete review of the plan to be undertaken at the end of the ten year period.

## PART FOUR

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### REGIONAL OVERVIEW

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4.1.1 The area managed as the Region is described in Gazette No. 83 of 24 May 1990 at page 1861 and is also described on page 8 of this plan.

4.1.2 The Taranaki Fish and Game Region is extremely diverse with dramatic landscapes and a considerable variation in climate and land use. This is also recognised in the diversity of habitats and fishing and hunting opportunities in the Region.

4.1.3 The Region includes the territorial Councils of New Plymouth District, Stratford District, South Taranaki District, Wanganui District and parts of the Ruapehu and Rangitikei Districts. It also encompasses the Taranaki Regional Council Area and part of the Horizons Regional Council area.

4.1.4 Based on the 2006 provisional census data, only the New Plymouth district has shown a significant increase in population since the 2001 census. Four of the remaining districts show a continued decrease in population. The largest part of the Region's population (over 50%) can be found in the cities of New Plymouth and Wanganui. There is a large and growing population of older people, but a declining rural population.

4.1.5 The economy within the Region is based on agriculture, meat processing, forestry, tourism, manufacturing and energy production.

Table 1. Regional Census Data, showing the differences in population between the 2001 and 2006 census

<b>Statistics NZ Census Data</b>				
<b>District Area</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>Plus/Minus</b>
New Plymouth	68,109	66,603	68,901	2,298
Stratford	9,543	8,886	8,892	6
South Taranaki	29,136	27,537	26,484	-1,053
Wanganui	45,042	43,266	42,639	-627
Ruapehu	16,743	14,295	13,572	-723
Rangitikei	16,356	15,102	14,712	-390
<b>Totals</b>	<b>184,929</b>	<b>175,689</b>	<b>175,200</b>	<b>-489</b>

### Topography

4.1.6 The Region comprises of a number of geographical areas varying from the mountainous terrains of Mount Taranaki and its associated ringplain in the west and Mount Ruapehu to the east of the region. A broad area of steep hill country spreads from the eastern side of the northern Taranaki coastal terraces to the north of

Wanganui and into the Waimarino area. In contrast to the rugged and remote geography in the north of the region the Hawera to Wanganui coastal strip provides a more gentle and undulating landscape which is dominated by its coast line and the estuarine environment of the many regional rivers that flow into the Northern and Southern Taranaki Bight's.

### **Climate**

4.1.7 The Region's climate is influenced by its westerly position in the North Island, its topography and is directly affected by weather systems that develop in the Tasman Sea and move east across the north island. Taranaki enjoys a generally sunny climate with moderate temperatures. Rainfall varies greatly throughout the region, ranging from less than 1,400 mm in the coastal areas to in excess of 8,000 mm at the summit of Mount Taranaki. Rainfall also increases with elevation in the Taranaki, Wanganui and Waimarino area hill country. The region can be windy but wind strength varies greatly due to the Region's differing topography.

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## **HISTORY**

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4.2.1 Fish and Game Councils in New Zealand owe their origins to the Acclimatisation Societies that began to form during the 1860s. The Wanganui Acclimatisation Society along with Nelson was one of the first with rules and objectives dating from 1863. The Societies were initially established for both the acclimatisation of species and the regulation of angling and hunting in a way which enabled access to all, unlike the situation prevailing in the United Kingdom at the time. By about 1900 the number of Acclimatisation Societies had spread so that virtually the whole country was covered and as many as 40 societies, including the Taranaki, Stratford, Hawera and Waimarino Acclimatisation Societies were formed.

4.2.2 It was not until the formation of Fish and Game Councils in 1990 that the Taranaki, Stratford, Hawera and Wanganui Acclimatisation Societies and the Waimarino Ward of the Central North Island Wildlife Conservancy became united to form the Taranaki region as one of the 12 Fish and Game Regions. The formation of Taranaki as a single Fish and Game Region resulted in two operational bases being established, with a field office in New Plymouth and managerial, administrative and field support based in Wanganui.

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## **HABITATS PRESENT WITHIN THE REGION**

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4.3.1 Since the majority of the Region's sports fish and game species have self-sustaining populations, maintenance of harvestable populations depends upon the maintenance of existing habitat. Therefore, much of Fish and Game's efforts go into habitat protection, either directly by assisting landowners to develop or enhance existing wetland areas or indirectly by statutory advocacy through the Resource Management Act 1991, Conservation Act 1987 or other similar legislation. Since the advent of Fish and Game in 1990, statutory advocacy has become increasingly important as pressures on habitat increase due to changes in land use and development.

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## **SPORTS FISH HABITAT**

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4.4.1 Purchase or ownership of sports fish habitat is not desirable as this might be regarded as ownership or exclusive use of the sports fish resource itself. The

sporting ethic and the legislation holds that the sports fish resource is a public one, managed by Fish and Game Councils on behalf of licence holders who each contribute towards management. Sports fish (and game birds) are publicly owned and managed under New Zealand law, irrespective of their location.

4.4.2 In addition, the environment in which sports fisheries are located is publicly administered and those administrative bodies are required under the purpose and principles section of the Resource Management Act 1991 to have particular regard to the protection of the habitats of sports fish and to recognise and provide for the protection of significant habitats of indigenous species. Some game birds are indigenous species and many sports fish habitats are also significant native fish habitats, for species such as whitebait (*Galaxias* spp.) and eels (*Anguilla* spp).

4.4.3 The habitat of sports fish is largely also a public resource of lakes and rivers, administered by a variety of public bodies according to various legislation. This plan therefore lists at Appendix 1 the various rivers and lakes and wetlands in the Region as sites of recreational interest to anglers and hunters. Some habitats, like small wetlands and smaller trout streams and spawning tributaries, are not included in this list as not all are known or even recognised. While these might be less important individually, all are extremely important as a whole and policy is required to protect them.

4.4.4 Identification of habitats in this plan ensures local authorities give due recognition to sports fish and game bird resources and habitats in their planning. The Department of Conservation is also required under Section 6(ab) of the Conservation Act 1987 as one of its functions, to “preserve so far as is practicable all indigenous freshwater fisheries and protect recreational freshwater fisheries and freshwater fish habitats”. Section 53(3) (d) of the same Act also states that the Director-General “shall advocate the conservation of aquatic life and freshwater fisheries generally”. Similarly, a function of the Department of Conservation under the Wildlife Act is to protect all wildlife under that Act.

4.4.5 Outside the hunting season defined by statute and Game Notices, all game species have the status of protected species. The Department’s statutory oversight of these species exists irrespective of whether they are native or not. The status of these species is determined by statute, not their origin.

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## **GAME BIRD HABITAT**

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4.5.1 In the case of game birds, there are different pressures operating on the provision of habitat. For waterfowl, much of the suitable habitat, particularly smaller wetlands and water bodies, is on private land. The Council has promoted and supported wetland inventories with local authorities in the region. Alteration of water levels in wetlands should require consent or rules in regional plans to ensure that activities in wetlands do not adversely affect their value as wildlife habitat.

4.5.2 Fish and Game can also manage public land or acquire an interest in private land, or purchase land to protect or enhance game bird habitat and hunting opportunities. While ownership or management of land is relatively costly, it provides greater certainty of ensuring habitat retention. Where there is resource input for private land from Fish and Game, normally through grants provided by the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust Board, it may be appropriate to safeguard that by way of covenant on the title. Often, at the most minimal level, Council staff are able to offer advice to landowners which can assist in management of their private land to

provide habitat. Fish and Game expertise in this field is now sought-after by landowners and other parties. There are opportunities to seek funding support to facilitate this process. Most game bird hunting opportunities within the region exist on private land and the Council works to promote or enhance positive contact with the region's landowners to facilitate game bird habitat and hunting opportunities.

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## REGIONAL FISHING AND HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES

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4.6.1 For game bird species management purposes the Region has been divided into three sub-areas. Each sub-area is subject to game bird population assessments, sports fish spawning and drift dive surveys and hunting and fishing compliance operations. Hunting regulations are published for each sub-area and are based on population trends and bird counts for those areas. Sports fish and game birds have no concept of any geographical delineation imposed upon a region by man and mainly contain themselves to water catchment areas, breeding areas and feeding areas. Regulations pertaining to sports fishing within the Region are restricted to individual rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and dams.

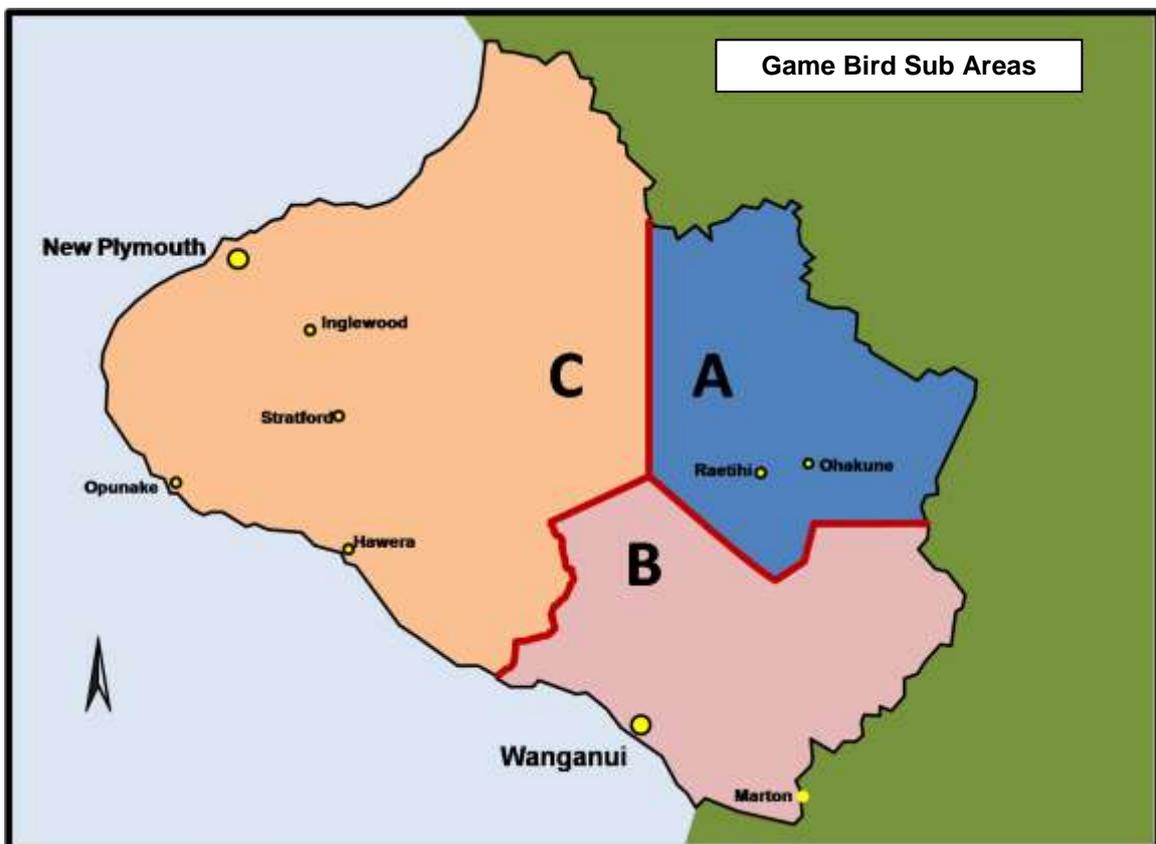


Figure 2. Taranaki Region Game Bird Sub Areas

4.6.2 The borders of the Region's sub-areas run parallel with either natural or manmade geographical features such as roads and rivers or, where necessary, they will run in a straight line across the map from one topographical position to another. For the purposes of this document the hunting opportunities will be outlined by sub-area and fishing by named areas.

## **HUNTING**

### **SUB AREA A**

#### **Game Bird Hunting**

4.6.3 Area A provides hunters with numerous opportunities across the area. Mallard, paradise shelduck, pukeko and black swan all make good use of the hundreds of dams, ponds and lakes that can be found in the Waimarino area. The fertile soils surrounding Mount Ruapehu produce a number of crops that can attract game birds in large numbers.

4.6.4 Paradise shelduck are widespread throughout the area and make up most of the game bird harvest in Area A. Over the past decade numbers have been trending downwards in Area A and specifically in the Waimarino area near Mt Ruapehu. In order to allow the population to recover, a reduced 5-bird daily bag limit was put into place for the area in 2004. The trend count for paradise shelduck in January 2009 indicated that the population had begun to recover, at the same time an increase in crop and pasture damage caused by the birds was being reported within the area and a more liberal daily limit was set for the 2010 game bird season.

4.6.5 There are moderate numbers of black swan within the area. The black swan remains stable but fewer hunters are targeting black swan in favour of more table-worthy game birds.

#### **Upland Game Hunting**

4.6.6 Forestry blocks are numerous within the area and provide hunters with limited upland game bird hunting. While numbers of both pheasant and californian quail are reported as being seen, few are hunted within this area.

### **SUB AREA B**

#### **Game Bird Hunting**

4.6.7 As in other areas of the Region mallard, paradise shelduck, pukeko and black swan all provide significant opportunities for hunters in Area B. Dominated by low land topography and a number of large coastal dune lakes that run from Turakina through to Waitotara. This area has a substantial amount of game bird habitat that draws in and retains birds in large numbers.

4.6.8 The Turakina, Whangaehu, Whanganui and Waitotara Rivers all have their estuaries within this area providing coastal wetlands and the rivers themselves to hunt on. This area of the regional coastline is also home to a significant number of shoveler duck and black swan. The Region's swan population appears to consist of two components: resident birds that are present throughout the year and visiting birds that are part of a migratory population that moult at Farewell Spit.

4.6.9 Located just a five minute drive south of Wanganui, Lake Wiritoa is a coastal dune lake administered by the Wanganui District Council. There are five hunting stands located on the western side of the lake that are open for public hunting each season.

4.6.10 Located just to the north of Wiritoa, is the very secluded Lake Kohata. Lake Kohata is a Wildlife Management Reserve administered by the Council. Kohata also accommodates 5 hunting stands that are held by lifetime ballots.

4.6.11 The Hawkens Wetland Area is located at the mouth of the Waitotara River and provides balloted hunting for up to 8 hunters. This area was developed to promote the introduction of junior hunters to the sport and the number of adult hunters is restricted. The area is privately owned but developed with funding from the Game Bird Habitat Trust Board and is protected by a QEII covenant.

#### **Upland Game Hunting**

4.6.12 Lismore Forest is open to hunting by the public by permit on weekends and public holidays only offering hunters an opportunity to hunt for pheasant and californian quail.

4.6.13 Harakeke Forest is open to hunting by the public by permit on weekends and public holidays only offering hunters an opportunity to hunt for both pheasant and californian quail.

### **SUB AREA C**

#### **Game Bird Hunting**

4.6.14 This area contains more than 1,500 lakes, ponds and wetlands – the majority on private land. Mallard and paradise shelduck are widespread and abundant throughout the area particularly in those areas developed for agriculture. Most of the remaining grey duck habitat in the region occurs in forested backcountry areas, such as in rivers, streams and wetlands located in the East Taranaki Hill Country. Pukeko are widespread in and near marshes and waterways throughout the area.

#### **Upland Game Hunting**

4.6.15 Pheasant and californian quail are scattered in small numbers throughout the area with most being encountered along the Coastal Strip between Waitotara and Mohakatino, where they can be locally common. The clearance of coastal dune areas and the eradication of both boxthorn and lupin have reduced suitable habitat available to upland game.

4.6.16 The Nukumarū Recreational Reserve is situated northwest of Wanganui City and along the coast north and south of the Waitotara River Mouth and offers game bird hunting by permit to the public. The reserve holds a good number of pheasant and has held californian quail, though sightings of these have become less common.

### **ANGLING**

#### **Angling opportunities in the Ruapehu/Waimarino areas**

4.6.17 Raetihi Hydro Dam was formed in the early part of last century for supply of electricity to the Raetihi area and takes its inflow from the Makotuku, Makara and Makaraiti Streams. Brown trout have the lake to themselves and the average size is about 1 kilogram. However the largest fish present grow to about 2.5 kilograms. The trout population is self perpetuating, there being spawning habitat available in the inlet race.

4.6.18 Retaruke/Kaitieke River Systems - The portions of these rivers most suitable for fly fishing are upstream of their confluence; the Retaruke providing about eight kilometres of fishable water and the Kaitieke about three kilometers before the gorge walls became so steep as to deter all but the most energetic angler. These sections are of typical pool and riffle character, fairly shallow and can be quite comfortably fished in thigh waders. The remaining 20 kilometres downstream to the junction with the Whanganui River are deeper in character with the water colour much more

noticeable. This water is more suited to spinning. Both brown and rainbow trout are present.

4.6.19 The Manganuioteao River has its source on Mt. Ruapehu together with its tributary streams the Waimarino, Makatote and Mangaturuturu. The Manganuioteao River is a nationally significant trout fishery and is protected by a National Water Conservation Order. It is the Region's most popular trout fishery (2007-2008 National Angler Survey). The Manganuioteao supports a mixed population of rainbow and brown trout with an average size of 1.5 kilograms, with some fish up to 3.5 kilograms.

4.6.20 Oroutaha Stream - Whilst driving towards the Manganuioteao River anglers will notice a small but attractive stream lying to the right of and flowing roughly parallel to Raetihi Ohura Road. The Oroutaha is a tributary of the Manganuioteao River, joining at a point close to the Pukekaha Road turn-off. The stream rises close to State Highway 4 and has a total length of about 12 kilometres, the headwaters being very small. The natural flow is augmented by the tailrace outflow from Raetihi hydro dam for the last 5 kilometres and this section has some very good pools and riffles. The water is generally shallow and tannin stained with good nymph or dry fly water. Fine gear and a low profile are recommended. The stream shares the fish population with the parent river, but the rainbow trout seem reluctant to hold in the shallow water and most of the fish taken are between 1 and 2 kilograms.

4.6.21 Lahar Lake provides an alternative to river fishing in the Ruapehu District area especially if the river levels are high. Fed by three clear coldwater springs the lake is stocked with rainbow trout which grow up to 2 kilograms. Located in Horopito, just north of Raetihi, the lake is open all year for fishing and visiting anglers should have success on spinners or fly.

4.6.22 The Taonui River is a spring fed river that rises amid regenerating scrub on the high ground between Ohakune and Horopito and joins the Mangawhero at a point halfway between Ohakune and Raetihi and holds good sized brown trout throughout its length.

4.6.23 The upper Mangawhero contains mostly brown trout and as no stocking has been done for some years all the fish are naturally bred and wild. The upper river is isolated from the sea by large waterfalls at Kakatahi.

4.6.24 The Tokiahuru and Waitaiki River Streams come together at a point about 4 kilometres above the Whangaehu River confluence and above this point are rather small, but both are still fishable. The average size of brown and rainbow trout in this water is 2 kg but several fish well in excess of 3 kg have been taken.

4.6.25 Rokes Dam provides additional lake angling opportunities. The dam is located on private land between Ohakune and Raetihi. The dam receives releases of two year old rainbow trout and fingerling brown and rainbow trout.

#### **Angling opportunities in the Wanganui area**

4.6.26 Lake Wiritoa is stocked annually with well conditioned two year old rainbow trout from the Eastern Fish and Game Region's Ngongataha hatchery. It also has a thriving, self sustaining population of perch. The lake has extremely good access for hunters and anglers alike.

4.6.27 Lake Kohata offers anglers some very good perch fishing and is a good alternative to Lake Wiritoa when that lake is busy with water skiers and other

recreational users. While only a small lake, it has held some good sized perch that can grow to 1.5kg.

4.6.28 Lake Pauri supports a self sustaining perch fishery and is located 3km south of Lake Wiritoa. Lake Pauri is surrounded by private farmland.

4.6.29 The Turakina River is located 15 kilometres south of Wanganui. The river can have high sediment loads and is willow-choked in places, but does hold some good sized brown trout.

4.6.30 Lake Namunamu is a 13 hectare lake set high in the hills near Hunterville. The lake provides a different fishing experience and a valuable alternative for anglers when rivers are high and dirty from rainfall. The lake is stocked annually with 1000 yearling rainbow trout that grow well and fish of around 2kg are a common catch.

4.6.31 The Whanganui River is New Zealand's largest navigable river and meanders for 220km from Mt Ngauruhoe until it reaches the coast. Both rainbow and brown trout are available but brown trout predominate with some large fish being caught within Wanganui city limits. Good size fish have been caught off the Upokongaroa Jetty just north of the town. The best fishing is undoubtedly further up the river however.

4.6.32 The lower Mangawhero River is a good brown trout fishery which regularly offers up fish to about 1.5kg. A good section of the river is closely followed by State Highway 4 and access from the road is safe and easy in many areas.

#### **Angling opportunities in the Taranaki area**

4.6.33 The Waiwhakaiho River contains mostly brown trout, which grow to 2.3kg or more, plus the odd rainbow. The Waiwhakaiho River is the region's fourth most popular trout fishery (2007-2008 National Angler Survey). The river is subject to rapid rises in flow with heavy rainfall on the mountain.

4.6.34 Kaiau Stream, an upper Waiwhakaiho River tributary, provides challenging nymph and dry fly fishing for large browns up to 2.6kg.

4.6.35 Lake Rotomanu is located near the Waiwhakaiho River mouth in New Plymouth. For many years this fishery was stocked with 2 year old rainbow trout, but prolific growth of aquatic macrophytes in recent years has compromised the fishery and trout have not been released. Good sized perch are present and if issues with macrophyte growth can be addressed, Lake Rotomanu would again be an ideal place for junior and novice anglers. It is close to town and there is easy access to the entire lake.

4.6.36 The Lake Mangamahoe hydro reservoir is the region's second most popular fishery (2007-2008 National Angler Survey). Wild brown trout up to 2.6kg and hatchery rainbows (Lake Tarawera strain) up to 2.25kg are present.

4.6.37 The Waiongana and its tributary Mangaoraka Stream contain brown trout averaging 1.5kg.

4.6.38 Lake Ngangana is a 4ha lake near Waitara that is stocked with two-year-old rainbow trout in spring each year. There is a walking track round the lake giving good access to a dozen fishing sites.

4.6.39 The Manganui River holds good numbers of brown trout up to 3kg. In its middle reaches a weir diverts much of the Manganui's flow into the Motukawa hydro scheme although a recently completed fish pass and residual flow has restored the migratory pathway along the river after a break of 75 years.

4.6.40 Maketawa Stream is located 4km south of Inglewood on SH3. This Manganui River tributary holds a good population of large brown trout up to 2.5kg. Good water quality, wily fish and an entrenched and boulder strewn riverbed make for challenging fishing. Creeper fishing is effective, but nymphing predominates with hare and copper, halfback, caddis and stonefly patterns favoured.

4.6.41 Lake Ratapiko is a 21-hectare hydro reservoir located near Tariki that contains hatchery rainbow trout up to 2.7 kg, with wild browns up to 2 kg and perch up to 1.5kg also present.

4.6.42 The Patea River runs through the heart of Stratford and is one of the ringplain's most productive brown trout fisheries. Good fishing is available within Stratford town, although the largest fish are present below Skinner Road. Large browns up to trophy size and a few rainbows are also present in the river below Patea Dam, where there is plenty of fishable water between McColl's bridge and the dam face. The Patea River is the region's third most popular trout fishery (2007-2008 National Angler Survey).

4.6.43 Lake Rotorangi is a scenic hydro lake located in the Patea River catchment area east of Eltham that is 46km long and contains plenty of perch that grow to 1kg. Few trout are present in the middle and lower reaches of the lake, but the upper reaches from Glen Nui boat ramp up to the first river rapid can produce good conditioned brown and rainbow trout to 2.25kg.

4.6.47 The Waingongoro River is the region's fifth most popular trout fishery (2007-2008 National Angler Survey). In its upper reaches, it is a clear mountain stream supporting 5-20 brown trout per km. Below Eltham the Waingongoro is tannin stained, but good populations of brown and rainbow trout are present. The Waingongoro is perhaps the only river in NZ where stocking with rainbow trout has succeeded in changing a fishery from one dominated by brown trout, to one where rainbows make up 70% of the catch. This productive fishery is a great place for beginners and has seen several generations of anglers being introduced to the sport.

4.6.48 Kapuni Stream provides high quality sight-fishing opportunities for large brown trout, particularly in the middle and upper reaches. Kapuni brown trout are well educated and can be extremely challenging for the angler to hook.

4.6.49 The Kaupokonui Stream and its largest tributary, Mangawhero Stream, contain good-sized brown and rainbow trout. In recent years, liberation of hatchery reared rainbow trout yearlings into the Kaupokonui has resulted in the establishment of a wild rainbow trout population.

4.6.50 Opunake Lake is a shallow hydro reservoir that contains wild brown trout originating from the adjacent Waiaua River and is also stocked with R-strain rainbow yearlings.

4.6.51 The Stony (Hangatahua) River has the best water quality of any ringplain fishery and in 1985 was the first NZ river to be granted a Local Water Conservation Notice. Releases of two-year-old hatchery rainbows are currently providing good angling opportunities, but the fishery is periodically devastated by erosion events

occurring in the Stony's headwaters on Mount Taranaki/Egmont. As the Stony is the steepest ringplain catchment, it is prone to flash flooding with heavy rainfall on the mountain.

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## SPECIES PRESENT WITHIN THE REGION

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4.7.1 Sports fish and game birds in New Zealand are a public resource. This is one of the underlying principles of the angling and hunting tradition in New Zealand.

4.7.2 The Taranaki Fish and Game Region offers some of the most diverse opportunities for angling and hunting in the country. Being located to the southwest of the North Island the region's hunters are able to harvest all game bird species and anglers are able to fish for specimen brown and rainbow trout. As noted previously much of the habitat that sustains these populations is under constant pressure from land development and changes in agricultural land use, such as dairy conversions and the loss of wetland habitat. However, the region continues to offer hunters and anglers excellent opportunities to pursue and enjoy their chosen recreational pastimes.

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## SPORTS FISH

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### **Brown Trout**

4.8.1 Brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) were introduced to the region as early as 1875. This marked the beginning of a long period of liberations by the area's former Acclimatisation Societies, when millions of brown trout ova, fry, fingerlings and yearling fish were stocked into virtually every waterway in the region.

4.8.2 Self-sustaining brown trout populations were quickly established in the majority of waters, but there was a widely-held belief among anglers that natural reproduction was not sufficient to sustain trout populations at the habitat carrying capacity. This was thought to apply particularly to the high gradient, bouldery streams draining the Mount Taranaki/Egmont Ringplain. The Acclimatisation Societies who administered this area alleviated angler concern by spending significant proportions of their income on liberating hatchery-reared trout and planting boxes of trout ova in streams.

4.8.3 Taranaki Acclimatisation Society operated a hatchery between 1930 and 1961, from which it released up to 350,000 fingerling or older fish into northern Taranaki streams each year, as well as supplying the Stratford and Hawera Societies with fish. From 1962, ova were planted directly in streams in "Baker boxes". This practice reached a peak in 1969, when 800,000 ova were planted. However, the discovery of whirling disease in the South Island in 1971 quickly extinguished the main supply of brown trout ova. From 1974 until the cessation of brown trout stocking in 1990, the release of fry, fingerlings and yearlings occurred on a much smaller scale, owing to the rapidly increasing cost of hatchery reared fish.

4.8.4 Reductions in the median and low flows of rivers as a result of bush clearance, land drainage and water abstraction, along with the nutrient enrichment of waterways from intensive agricultural development all continue to adversely impact on trout populations within the region.

4.8.5 Today, it is evident that brown trout are well adapted to local conditions. Their ability to survive the flash floods that can occur in the region's many mountain

streams by occupying stable escape cover, has meant they have thrived in the full range of available habitats and are the dominant sports fish in the region.

4.8.6 Catchable-sized brown trout are normally present at between 5 and 25 individuals per kilometre in the clear-water rivers that drain the Mount Taranaki/Egmont Ringplain and Mt. Ruapehu areas. These waterways are generally classified as supporting low and medium density brown trout populations. Many of them are also low recruitment fisheries, in that juvenile trout are present in very low densities. Even the nationally important fishery in the Manganuioteao River appears to be reliant on recruitment from low numbers of fry and fingerlings. Brown trout populations in many of these waterways are dominated by large adults, which may be up to 9 years old. The combination of low density, low recruitment fisheries based on a predominance of large old fish, means that many populations are considered to be vulnerable to overharvest, particularly those residing in smaller streams.

4.8.7 Brown trout populations have not been assessed in rivers draining siltstone/mudstone catchments of the East Taranaki and North Wanganui Hill Country, but the lower reaches of rivers such as the Waitara, Patea and Whanganui are known to contain some of the largest and best conditioned fish in the region. Anglers often assert that such fish are sea-run brown trout. While it is known that some browns do go to sea (e.g. a fish tagged at the Orautoha Trap on the Manganuioteao River was caught in the Kaupokonui Stream on the Mount Taranaki/Egmont Ringplain 125 days later having travelled at least 112 km down-river and 118 km along the coast), analysis of scale samples from over 400 fish indicate that there are no significant populations of sea-run brown trout in the region. Suspected sea-run fish are often river residents that dwell in the lower estuarine pools of rivers, where an abundant food supply is available.

### **Rainbow Trout**

4.8.8 Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) were introduced to the region in 1880 (Waitangi Stream), but most introductions occurred from the early 1900's. The former Acclimatisation Societies undertook a widespread and extended stocking program similar to that for brown trout. However, their efforts were much less successful and rainbow trout have established self-sustaining populations in only a few rivers. In all cases they are present in conjunction with Brown Trout (i.e. as mixed brown and rainbow trout populations) and they seldom dominate. Their lack of success is due in part to the fact that brown trout were already well established, as browns are highly territorial and will dominate rainbows by forcing them into inferior feeding positions. Rainbow trout also associate less strongly with in stream cover and are therefore less able to survive the adverse effects of floods, particularly those occurring in the high gradient, straight-channelled streams of the Taranaki Ringplain.

4.8.9 The most highly valued rainbow trout population in the region is located in the Manganuioteao River in the Waimarino area. Elsewhere in the area, a relatively dense population of small rainbow trout is present in Tokiahuru Stream. This is the only fishery in the region where wild rainbows dominate, but the small average size of fish means the population is not particularly attractive to anglers. The Retaruke River, a backcountry fishery located west of Owango, contains good sized rainbows, but the population has not been assessed by drift diving owing to the poor water clarity of the river.

4.8.10 The Waingongoro River supports the most abundant rainbow trout population on the Mount Taranaki/Egmont Ringplain. Since releases of yearling rainbows began in the late 1970's, the Waingongoro fishery has been "transformed" from one based entirely on brown trout, to one where 50-70% of the angler catch is rainbow

trout. While it appears that about 50% of the rainbow harvest is now of wild fish, much of the annual production of yearling rainbows from the Council's Hawera hatchery continues to be released to the Waingongoro. The success of rainbow liberations to the Waingongoro is probably due to the river's unusually sinuous channel shape, which provides a high proportion of pools to faster water. Thus, there are large areas of slower water in the lee of bends which rainbows may utilise to avoid the adverse effects of floods. The Waingongoro also has the highest median flow of any Ringplain waterway.

4.8.11 In recent years, the liberation of hatchery rainbow trout yearlings into the Kaipokonui Stream catchment on the south western Taranaki Ringplain has also met with success and anglers now report that they are catching good numbers of wild and hatchery rainbow trout in the catchment, some up to 2.5kg.

4.8.12 Low density rainbow trout populations in the Stony and Waiwhakaiho Rivers are virtually the only remaining remnants of the early liberations into Mount Taranaki/Egmont Ringplain waterways. The Stony River population apparently stems from a 1937 release into the Ahukawakawa Swamp, which is located within the Egmont National Park at 920 metres above sea level. The release gave rise to a stunted population of rainbows residing in a small, stable stream running through the swamp. A proportion of fry from this population appear to migrate downstream to the Stony River mainstem by going over the 20 metre Bell's Falls. Thereafter, they grow into hard-fighting fish that average around 1.5 kg.

4.8.13 Hatchery sustained populations of rainbow trout are maintained in Lake Rotomanu in New Plymouth and Lake Wiritoa in Wanganui by the release of two-year-old fish obtained from the Eastern Region's Ngongataha hatchery. Two-year old rainbow trout from the Department of Conservation's Turangi trout hatchery are also released annually into the Patea River at Stratford and Roke's Dam in the Waimarino area. These releases provide "instant" angling opportunities for junior and novice anglers. Hatchery populations of rainbow trout are also maintained in Lakes Mangamahoe, Ratapiko, Opunake and Namunamu through the release of yearling rainbow trout from the Council's Hawera hatchery.

### **Perch**

4.8.14 Perch (*Perca fluviatilis*) were introduced to the Region in the late 1800's. Perch currently inhabit at least twenty coastal dune lakes extending along the west coast side of the North Island from Turakina to Opunake and generally on the sea side (south) of the Marton - New Plymouth railway line, in what this plan refers to as the Wanganui-Hawera Coastal Strip. Perch are also present further north in Lakes Rotorangi and Rotokare (Eltham), Lake Ratapiko (Tariki), Waipu Lagoons (Bell Block), Lake Rotomanu and Barrett Lagoon (New Plymouth), Lake Cowley (Waitara) and in an unknown, but large, number of farm dams on private land. Perch inhabit the Patea River and its tributaries above Lake Rotorangi and also the Patea River below Patea Dam. They are probably also present in the Waitara River, as Lakes Cowley and Ratapiko drain into that catchment.

4.8.15 There are assumed to be thousands of perch well established in breeding, self sustaining populations in lakes and ponds. The status of riverine populations is unknown. Perch populations in particular lakes have been observed to fluctuate on a cycle up to ten years long between modest numbers (hundreds) of large fish (over 1 kg) and larger numbers (thousands) of small fish (up to 200 grams). Pressure on perch populations, whether from anglers or shags, has been perceived to incline populations towards fewer and larger fish.

4.8.16 The region has no structured database on perch populations. Length-frequency histograms of perch caught in Lakes Cowley and Rotorangi show that most fish are small. Regulations governing the exploitation of perch fisheries are liberal. Fisheries are generally open to angling for most of the year. There are no restrictions either on the methods that may be used to catch perch (except that anglers must use a rod and running line), or on the number of perch that may be killed by an angler in any one day.

4.8.17 Perch live in lakes and slower flowing rivers which often have poorer water quality, (higher nutrient levels, turbidity, temperature and lower oxygen) than is popularly regarded as optimal for sustaining a good trout fishery. Perch are known to sustain breeding populations in the lower reaches of Wellington Region rivers such as the Ruamahunga in the Wairarapa, and may be inferred to be present in at least the lower reaches of several of the silty rivers between Wanganui and Hawera (e.g. Patea). They are, however, a wholly freshwater species, at no stage entering the sea or even estuaries where salinities are elevated (McDowall; 1990).

4.8.18 Perch were liberated into various lakes and farm ponds by the former Acclimatisation Societies but have also been illegally released by private individuals into many farm dams in the region in the mistaken belief that they will control water weed.

4.8.19 In some lakes perch of all sizes feed mostly on midge larvae and pupae, but in rivers like the Selwyn in Canterbury common bullies are the preferred food source (McDowall; 1990). In lakes, small perch (less than 200 mm) tend to feed on zooplankton or midges, while larger perch switch to forage fish if they are available. Cannibalism of small perch by large ones also occurs, particularly in high density, stunted populations.

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## **COARSE SPORTS FISH AND NON-SPORTS FISH**

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4.9.1 Perch is the only coarse sports fish established within the region. As mentioned in the previous chapter the species has become widely distributed as a result of unauthorised liberations in the past, an activity that has adversely affected both trout and native fish populations. The Council is totally opposed to the illegal liberation of any species of sports fish, coarse or otherwise, within the region and will seek removal of the species (where practicable) from any areas where they do not already exist.

4.9.2 The Council has developed a policy in respect of sports fish liberations to exercise its responsibilities under Section 59 of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations for any sports fish, including coarse sports fish, introductions and this acknowledges that any requests for such introductions also need the separate approval of the Department of Conservation and/or the Minister of Conservation under Section 26ZM (2) and (3) of the Act. This Council will continue to exercise its right under Section 26ZM(6) to liberate sports fish into waters where they are already exist in order to maintain and enhance sports fisheries, where this will not compromise existing significant native fish biodiversity values.

4.9.3 The threat posed to sports fish and native fish populations by pest species such as koi carp, gambusia and rudd are well known. This Council commends the excellent work currently being conducted by the Department of Conservation, and Regional Councils, to eradicate these species from waters within the Taranaki Fish and Game Region and protect the fragile habitat that supports regional sports fish

populations. It is the responsibility of all anglers to report any sightings of known pest, or unknown, fish species to the Department of Conservation or Regional Council for action. Reports can be passed on to Taranaki Fish and Game Councillors or staff who will forward details to the relevant authorities.

4.9.4 This Council supports the national policy of the New Zealand Council which requires that any introductions of new sports fish would be into artificial water bodies only, in areas accessible to the public and where existing sports fisheries and native fisheries are protected. While any applications to liberate new species of sports fish in the region would be considered on their merits, having regard to relevant statutory provisions, national and regional Fish and Game Policy, the Council is unlikely to support any such applications. All such applications must be subject to prior approval by the Department of Conservation in accordance with Section 26ZM(3) of the Act.

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## GAME BIRDS

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### **Mallard and Grey Duck**

4.10.1 These two closely related species and their hybrids are essentially managed as a single entity by the Council. The mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) is an introduced species that has become New Zealand's most important game bird. The grey duck (*Anas superciliosa*) is a New Zealand native that is currently considered to be a sub-species of the Australian black duck, although the differences between sub-species are subtle and their genetic relationship has still to be clarified.

### **Mallard**

4.10.2 Mallard duck are widespread and abundant throughout the Region, particularly in areas developed for agriculture. Grey duck are also widespread, but tend to be found most often in unmodified wetlands and forested catchments.

4.10.3 While the first introductions of mallard from Britain in 1867 were not particularly successful, introduction of American birds in the 1930's by the former Auckland Acclimatisation Society saw the species establish firmly. Harvest information indicated that the mallard population increased rapidly in Taranaki during the late 1960's and 1970's at the expense of grey duck, which underwent a reciprocal decline in abundance. Mallard are now the most common wetland bird in the region and the most sought after game bird.

### **Grey Duck**

4.10.4 Prior to human colonisation, grey duck occupied almost every type of wetland from slower flowing rivers, lakes and lagoons, to streams, swamplands and estuaries. However, forest clearance, the drainage of wild wetlands and their replacement by small farm ponds greatly reduced the amount of habitat suitable for grey duck.

4.10.5 In time, grey duck would have adapted to the changed environment, were it not for the introduction of the mallard. Aggressive colonisation of modified habitats by mallard ensured that grey duck retreated along with the wild wetlands. The last remaining strongholds of grey duck are therefore located in areas with least agricultural development (e.g. the South Island's West Coast).

4.10.6 Most of the remaining grey duck habitat in the region occurs in forested backcountry areas, such as in rivers, streams and wetlands located in the East Taranaki Hill Country. Much of this habitat lies within land administered by the

Department of Conservation, although there are significant areas located on private land. Not all habitat is naturally created, as dams producing ponds backing into bush areas are well utilised by grey duck.

4.10.7 Mallard/grey duck combined comprised approximately 62.5% of the 2009 regional game bird harvest (Figure 3).

### Paradise Shelduck

4.10.8 The paradise shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*) is so named because in evolutionary terms it is between a goose and a duck. From the goose side paradise are long-lived, mate for life and don't breed until they are at least two years old. From the duck side they have large clutches and high duckling mortality but are delayed breeders and their rate of replacement is slow compared to ducks.

4.10.9 Widespread and abundant throughout the region, paradise shelduck populations originate from the release near National Park township of a small number of birds from Southland in the period 1916-21 (Williams; 1981). The conversion of forest to pasture and the creation of stock watering ponds provided large areas of new habitat for colonisation and paradise shelduck increased rapidly in the Waimarino area where numbers remain high today. Paradise shelduck invaded the Wanganui area in 1936 and increased in north Taranaki from the early 1960's and their range has increased significantly in the productive dairy lands of the Mount Taranaki/Egmont Ringplain over the last 10 years. Paradise shelduck comprised approximately 31.4% of the 2009 regional game bird harvest (Figure 3).

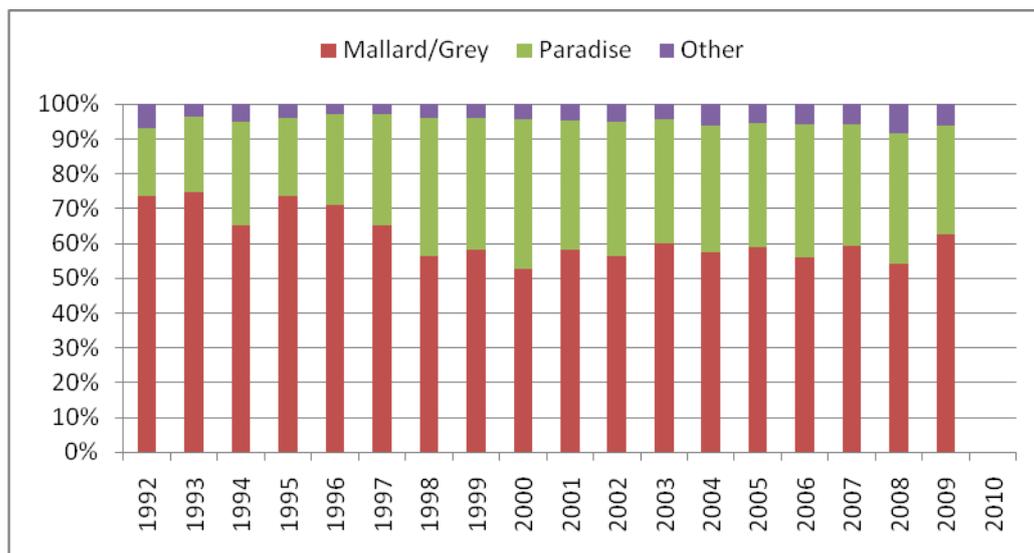


Figure 3. Composition by percentage of the annual game bird harvest, 1992 – 2009 seasons

### Shoveler

4.10.10 The shoveler duck (*Anas rhynchos*) is a New Zealand native that is recognised as a sub-species of its Australian counterpart. However, the distinctions are minor and it is likely there is regular immigration of Australian shoveler to New Zealand.

4.10.11 The shoveler is a specialist filter feeder that is heavily dependent on food resources available in highly fertile wetlands that contain shallow, open water habitat.

They are therefore primarily a lowland species. In the Region, the most significant habitats for shoveler are located in the dune lakes of the Wanganui-Hawera Coastal Strip.

4.10.12 Banding studies have shown that shoveler duck are highly mobile, with birds often moving the full length and breadth of New Zealand each year. Shoveler can therefore be considered to form a single national population that is widely dispersed throughout suitable habitats.

4.10.13 Fewer shoveler duck are shot by hunters in the Region and shoveler comprised only 0.36% of the 2009 regional game bird harvest.

#### **Black Swan**

4.10.14 Australian black swan (*Cygnus atratus*) were successfully liberated in NZ in 1864-68 but their increase was so rapid it appears there was also a major self-introduction from Australia in the late 1860's. They are not to be confused with the all white mute swan, which is a fully protected species.

4.10.15 Black swan are widely distributed throughout the region with greatest numbers occurring on dune lakes in the coastal strip areas. The regional swan population appears to consist of two separate components, resident birds that are present throughout the year and visiting birds that are part of a migratory population of swan that moult at Farewell Spit.

4.10.16 Black swan in the Region can probably be considered as a single population because of their inherent mobility. Few black swan are shot by hunters in the Region and black swan comprised only 0.17% of the 2009 regional gamebird harvest.

#### **Pukeko**

4.10.17 The pukeko (*Porphyrio porphyrio melanotus*) is an indigenous swamp hen with distinctive blue plumage and a bright red beak. They are widespread in and near marshes and waterways throughout the region, apart from on Mount Taranaki/Egmont and Ruapehu themselves.

4.10.18 There are inferred to be tens of thousands of pukeko widely distributed throughout the Region, although drive-by counts along randomly selected transects indicate that there are fewer pukeko present in areas where a high percentage of wetlands have been drained and filled for agricultural development. Pukeko is one of the native species that has most successfully adapted to the forest clearance and farm development that have characterised North Island land use changes over the last 200 years. The birds are inquisitive and apparently successful breeders despite the predations of cats and mustelids. Groups of birds are common, ranging from a hen with a clutch of gangly legged chickens through to mobs of fifty birds stalking swamps, paddocks near drains and along roadsides.

4.10.19 A modest number of pukeko are shot by hunters in the region, with pukeko comprising 3.9% of the 2009 regional gamebird harvest.

#### **Upland Game**

4.10.20 This group comprises of pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) and californian quail (*Lophortyx californicus*). Pheasant and californian quail are scattered in small numbers throughout the region, with the exceptions of Mounts Taranaki/Egmont and Ruapehu and large areas of dense native bush. However, they are most likely to be

encountered along the Coastal Strip between Wanganui and Mohakatino, where they can be locally common in areas with sufficient suitable habitat.

4.10.21 Pheasant and quail are exotic game birds that were introduced to the region by the Acclimatisation Societies in the 1860's and 1870's. Prior to 1990, the Societies located within the region had an ongoing program of pheasant releases, as it was felt continued releases were necessary to maintain wild populations. Pheasants were reared in captivity and annually released into the wild at Hawera until 1994. These releases were discontinued because survival rates and returns to the hunter were low and such releases were therefore economically unsustainable.

4.10.22 There has been no systematic program of population assessment for upland game birds. The most significant pressures on population levels are believed to be the loss or reduction of habitat, and increase in predators, by-kills from poisoning operations and harvest, in that order. Both species are ground nesting and are therefore acutely prone to predation by cats and mustelids. While there are significant variations in population numbers, the overall regional assessment for both populations is that they are at low but sustainable levels.

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## RECREATIONAL USE

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### SIGNIFICANCE OF REGIONAL RECREATIONAL AREAS

4.11.1 The major accessible habitats in the region have been assessed as to their relative recreational significance and the extent to which they contribute to the provision of opportunities for angling and hunting across the region. It should be noted from the outset that the vast majority of recreational game bird hunting occurs on private land, mainly farm ponds and dams and small natural or manmade lakes but also in scrub bush, paddocks and forested areas. Also worthy of note is that land occupiers are entitled to hunt on the properties they occupy without requiring a licence. The number of occupiers who use this opportunity to participate in hunting is unknown, but given the tradition and cultural importance afforded to hunting, especially by the rural community, it is assessed as being high.

4.11.2 As background to preparing this plan, the majority of known recreational sites used by anglers and public areas used by hunters have been listed at Appendix 1 to this document. These sites are based largely upon those water bodies identified by anglers during the National Angler Surveys (NAS) (Unwin and Brown, 1998; Unwin and Image, 2003, Unwin 2009) but have also been extended to include wetlands and any other major areas accessible to upland game or waterfowl hunting. Given the geographical size of the Region, most of which is rural, the precise number and location of sites used by hunters and anglers would be impossible and impractical to list within this management plan. Many such areas are unnamed, unreferenced, in the case of some streams and water bodies are ephemeral by nature, but provide habitat for both sports fish and game birds alike.

4.11.3 Those areas that have been listed have been assessed against their relative size, significance, Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) category and the species present which would support recreation. Appendix 1 lists the sites and the species available to the angler or hunter. The data is summarised in the following graphs to illustrate the differing range of types of recreational environment available in the region.

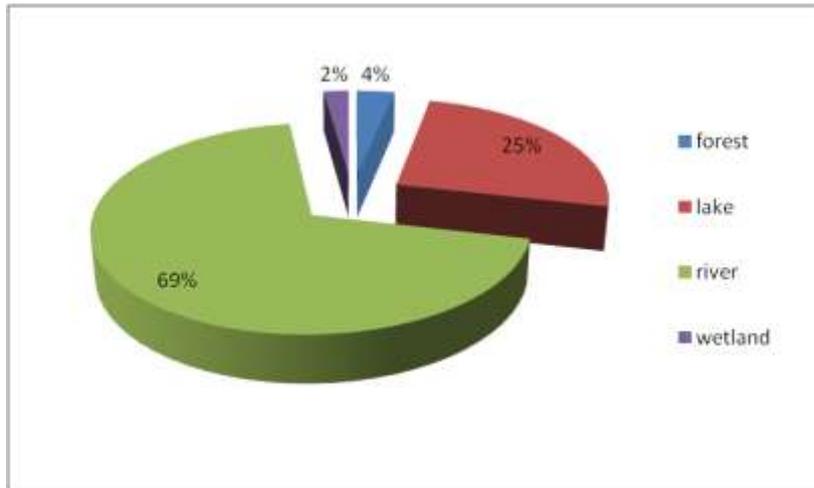


Figure 4. Types of angling and hunting recreational sites in the Taranaki Fish and Game Region

4.11.4 As shown in Figure 4 above, there are a great many rivers available to the angler in the Region, particularly around the Mount Taranaki/Egmont Ringplain where access is relatively easy. While there are also a number of public lakes open to duck hunters, some of which provide both angling and duck hunting opportunities, the vast majority of game bird hunting within the region takes place on privately owned ponds, dams and lakes and grass paddocks and feed crops for paradise shelduck.

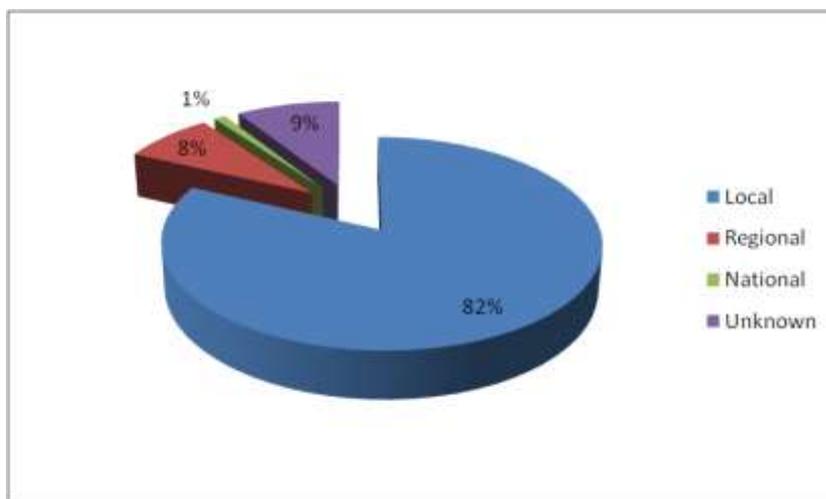


Figure 5. The relative significance of different angling and hunting recreational opportunities in the Taranaki Fish and Game Region

4.11.5 Significance was determined against criteria which have subsequently been applied to the whole NAS dataset (Deans, 2005), as below. Use data were taken from NAS data or regional surveys, the origin of anglers is taken from regional surveys or staff experience based upon compliance or other Fish and Game management activity. A user day is taken as being an occasion when an angler fished at a particular water body on a given day, without any minimum or maximum fishing time.

#### Local

The majority of participants in this activity are from the immediate locality and/or fewer than 1000 user days occur each year.

#### Regional

The majority (over 50%) of participants in this activity are from the wider region or beyond rather than just the immediate locality and/or more than 1000 but fewer than 5000 user days occur each year.

#### National

At least 20% of the participants in this activity have come from areas outside the region specifically to participate in the activity in this location and/or more than 5000 user days per annum.

4.11.6 Each site was also assigned into a ROS category. This approach is used extensively in the USA and now in New Zealand by the Department of Conservation to maintain a range of settings in which recreation can take place. These enable managers to ensure that a wide range of settings is maintained and manage the sites to maintain the full range of recreational opportunities. It is sometimes difficult to assign the full length of a given river or large site to a particular category. Some sites will vary in character in different parts; the predominant character was assigned in each case. The table used has been modified from that used by a number of Fish and Game Council in their Sports Fish and Game Management Plan and has since applied for sports fisheries across the whole country. The ROS categories for angling and hunting within Region are tabulated at Appendix 2 to this document.

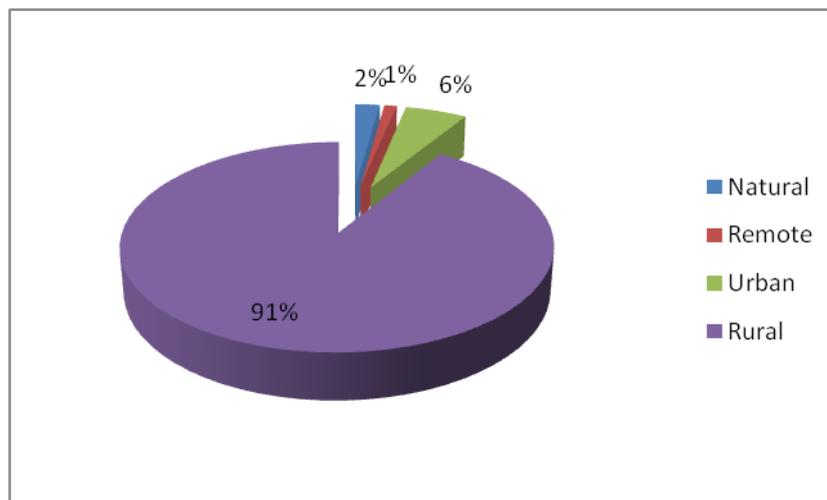


Figure 6. Distribution of different ROS categories in the Taranaki Fish and Game Region

4.11.7 The regional distribution of ROS categories are summarised in Figure 6. Clearly much of the recreational opportunity occurs across the rural environment. It is believed that there are greater angling opportunities within the more remote areas of the region but these are largely on unnamed tributaries to already identified streams and rivers.

4.11.8 The small percentage of natural sites can be attributed to continuation of urban, industrial, and in particular, agricultural development. There has been a significant loss of regional wetland habitat and natural in-stream character and values

due to land use change, the artificial straightening of streams and the drainage of swamp and wetland areas to create additional agricultural land.

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## ISSUES FOR THE REGION

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4.12.1 There are a number of national and regional issues of significant relevance to Council's interests. Consistent with its statutory functions the Council and the New Zealand Council seek to take an active role in the policy development processes underpinning many such issues and play an active advocacy role to protect its interests.

4.12.2 Some of the Council's most critical concerns relate to the implementation of the Resource Management Act 1991 by local authorities and permissions issued by them to undertake activities in or on, discharge contaminants into, or to extract freshwater from, water bodies. All these activities may adversely affect sports fish and game birds and their habitats<sup>1</sup>. Many of these concerns were confirmed in the November 2004 report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE) entitled "Growing for Good – Intensive Farming, Sustainability and New Zealand's Environment". These concerns are also reflected in the more recent OECD report (2007) on New Zealand environmental performance.

4.12.3 The Long-term State of the Environment physico-chemical and biological monitoring (TRC 2009, 2010) by the Taranaki Regional Council indicates that river and stream waters are generally of moderate to good quality, particularly at sites in the upper reaches of ring plain catchments, with some deterioration in a downstream direction coincident with increased farm run-off, stock access and point source discharges. In the lower reaches of most Taranaki catchments, elevated nutrient levels are high enough to promote algal growth under low flow conditions and macro-invertebrate community indices (MCI's) are generally indicative of mild to moderately polluted conditions. Trend analysis indicates that water quality is generally being maintained and in some cases improvements have been noted in response to the removal of point source discharges (TRC 2009a).

4.12.4 The Taranaki Regional Council has made good progress with the protection of 77 wetlands deemed to be regionally significant (TRC 2009a), but other wetlands are continuing to be lost to land drainage and agricultural development, with a recent study (TRC 2010a) identifying a net loss of 123ha of wetland in the 2001 – 2007 period. About 8% of Taranaki's original wetland extent remains.

4.12.5 The Council seeks to ensure public agencies with responsibilities for protecting ecosystems or habitat actively take the lead role in tackling issues to safeguard those ecological systems. Issues identified by the Council as critical to its interests include:

- water quality degradation, largely from land use intensification.
- water extraction for irrigation and industrial use.
- loss of and modification to wetlands, including estuaries.
- hydro development - impacting on fish and wildlife habitat, migration and angling opportunities.
- local authority implementation of the Resource Management Act 1991.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 7(h) Resource Management Act 1991

- recreational access to the outdoors - in particular access to rivers for fishing.
- private commercial use of public fisheries, lands and game resources.
- Treaty of Waitangi claims - impacting on the ownership and control of natural resources, rivers and lakes.
- biosecurity threats – e.g. pest fish like koi carp or gambusia and aquatic alga and weed species such as didymo or hornwort.
- the protection of the wild trout fishery and the equity of access for all anglers
- management of public lands and access to these.
- changing societal attitudes towards non-native species and the recreational pursuits of angling and hunting.

4.12.6 Operational issues are listed in this Plan under the respective output areas described in Part One above.

## PART FIVE

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### INTERPRETATION

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Coarse fish	family of non-salmonid sports fish often found in still or slow moving waters and named after the 'coarse' feel of their scales. Perch is the only coarse fish classified as a sports fish known to be established in the Taranaki region.
Dabbling duck	typically birds of fresh, shallow wetland, ponds and rivers. They usually feed in water by dabbling or tipping rather than submerging.
Game Birds	those species listed as such in the First Schedule of the Wildlife Act 1953 (see below under waterfowl and upland game).
Habitat	environment in which a particular species or group of species lives. It includes the physical and biotic characteristics that are relevant to the species concerned.
Indigenous	native to the area or self-introduced, rather than introduced by human agency. A subset of indigenous species are those endemic species, which are found only in the particular area or country.
Pest Fish	Includes noxious fish such as rudd as defined in the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations, unwanted organisms under the Biosecurity Act such as koi carp or gambusia or where defined by agreement with Fish and Game Councils in Regional Pest Management Strategies.
Ranger	any person appointed as such pursuant to section 26FA(1) or (2) of the Conservation Act 1987 and having powers under the Conservation and Wildlife Acts.
Salmonids	fish of the family Salmonidae. In New Zealand this family is represented by chinook, sockeye and atlantic salmon, rainbow and brown trout and brook char, lake trout and hybrids such as splake
Sports fish	those species listed as sports fish in the First Schedule of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983.
Sustainability	used in an ecological sense in this plan. The use of the components of an ecosystem in ways that allow for the perpetuation of the character and natural processes of that ecosystem.
Upland Game	those upland game species listed as game birds in the First Schedule of the Wildlife Act 1953, specifically pheasant, brown quail, californian quail, chukar, grey and red legged partridge.

Waterfowl those waterfowl species listed as game birds in the First Schedule of the Wildlife Act 1953, specifically mallard duck, grey duck, shoveler duck, paradise shelduck, pukeko and black swan.

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## **RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

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5.2.1 Taranaki Fish and Game Council and the New Zealand Council operate under two principle acts – the Conservation Act 1987 and Wildlife Act 1953 - and within a number of other statutes.

### **CONSERVATION ACT 1987**

5.2.2 The Council is established under the Conservation Act, which contains the legal authority for Fish and Game Councils to manage the country's sports fish and game bird resources. The Act also contains provisions that are relevant to public access, freshwater fisheries management, controls on fish and game recreation and the requirement for Fish and Game Councils to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Anglers Notices are promulgated under this Act. The Conservation General Policy was approved by the Minister of Conservation in 2005 under section 17C of this Act and provides guidance for the Council to use in its management of fish and game.

### **FISH AND GAME COUNCIL ELECTIONS REGULATIONS 1990**

5.2.3 These regulations are made under the Conservation Act and prescribe the procedure for the election of members of regional Fish and Game Councils and the appointment by such Councils of members of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council.

### **FRESHWATER FISHERIES REGULATIONS 1983**

5.2.4 The Freshwater Fisheries Regulations are made under the Conservation Act 1987. These regulations provide for controls on licensing, controls on fish tagging, use of electric fishing machines, protection of fish passage, regulation on fish transfer and the management of indigenous and noxious fish species.

### **WILDLIFE ACT 1953**

5.2.5 The Wildlife Act establishes how the legal authority to manage sports fish and game birds can be exercised. It establishes the right to control hunting through a licencing process, designates those species that are considered game birds, designates powers of Fish and Game warranted officers for the purposes of this Act and sets out penalties for offences under this Act. Game Hunting Notices are promulgated under this Act.

### **WILDLIFE REGULATIONS 1955**

5.2.6 These Wildlife Regulations are made under the Wildlife Act 1953. These regulations provide for game bird hunting licences, hunting methods and game bird liberations amongst other matters.

## **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991**

5.2.7 The Resource Management Act provides for the management of New Zealand's natural and physical resources, including sports fish and game bird habitat, access to waterways and their margins and wilderness, natural character and recreational values. Regional and territorial authorities must follow the processes set out in the Act for the making of development decisions and Fish and Game Councils may input into those processes. Fish and Game is bound by the provisions of the RMA, regional policy statements and regional and district plans. At the same time, the RMA requires regional and territorial Councils to have regard to any management plans and strategies prepared under other acts. These Councils therefore need to have regard to the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan when preparing or reviewing their plans and strategies. Taranaki Fish and Game Council will continue to work closely with Regional Authorities to achieve mutual goals.

5.2.8 A great deal of Fish and Game time and effort has gone into resource management advocacy to achieve habitat protection.

## **BIOSECURITY ACT 1993**

5.2.9 The Biosecurity Act includes provisions on the treatment of animals, which Taranaki Fish and Game must follow in its operations. Taranaki Fish and Game must also obtain approval under this Act to introduce new species of sports fish or game birds to the country. The Biosecurity Act also includes provision to prevent new pests and diseases from arriving in New Zealand and eradicating or controlling those already present.

5.2.10 Taranaki Fish and Game Council will continue to work closely with Biosecurity New Zealand concerning unwanted organisms such as koi carp, gambusia and more recently with the control and management of didymo.

## **NATIONAL PARKS ACT 1980**

5.2.11 National Parks are of high national standing, being preserved in their natural state for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit, use and enjoyment of the public. Egmont, Whanganui and part of the Tongariro National Parks all lie in the Taranaki Fish and Game Region and all support significant sports fishing opportunities. The Manganuioteao River near Raetihi supports a nationally significant fishery for brown and rainbow trout and was granted a National Water Conservation Order in 1989.

5.2.12 The New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) and the Department of Conservation in its national park management plans have recognised the value of sports fish and game bird resources and their ongoing management by Fish and Game. In 2005 the NZCA adopted a revised General Policy for National Parks under Section 44 of this Act. This policy provides guidance for the Council to use in its management decisions on fish and game in relation to National Parks.

5.2.13 Taranaki Fish and Game Council is unlikely to support liberations of sports fish into any areas outside the management area of existing stocks.

## **LOCAL BODIES OFFICIAL INFORMATION AND MEETINGS ACT 1987**

5.2.14 The Council is subject to the Local Bodies Official Information and Meetings Act. Its meetings are open to the public and must be advertised. All meetings must be transacted openly unless criteria defined in the Act have been met.

## **CROWN ENTITY ACT 2004, PUBLIC FINANCE ACT 1989 AND PUBLIC AUDIT ACT 2001**

5.2.15 All Fish and Game Councils are subject to the provisions of the Crown Entity Act, the Public Finance Act and Public Audit Act. This requires them to be audited annually by the Audit Office and to provide an annual report including a statement of objectives and a comparative statement of service performance. The report must be presented to a publicly advertised annual general meeting and to Parliament. Taranaki Fish and Game Council is a Public Entity in terms of these Acts.

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### **NOTIFYING THE PLAN**

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5.3.1 The procedure for preparing and gaining approval of sports fish and game bird management plans is set out in section 17M of the Conservation Act 1987. In summary it requires a regional Fish and Game Council to:

- a. Publish a notice of the draft plan in the newspaper.
- b. Give notice of the draft plan to:
  - i. the Director-General.
  - ii. representatives of the appropriate Iwi Authorities.
  - iii. Regional Councils and territorial authorities.
- c. Give such further notice of the plan as the regional Fish and Game Council thinks fit.
- d. Invite persons or organisations to send to the regional Fish and Game Council written submissions on the proposal before a date not less than 40 working days after the publication of the notice.
- e. Consult with such other persons or organisations, in such manner, as the regional Fish and Game Council considers practicable and appropriate.
- f. Give full consideration to any submissions and opinion made known to the regional Fish and Game Council.

5.3.2 It also requires:

- a. Every notice to state that the draft plan is available for inspection at the places and times specified in the notice.
- b. From the date of public notification until public opinion has been made known to the regional Fish and Game Council, the draft plan to be made available for public inspection during normal office hours and in such places and quantities as are likely to encourage public participation.
- c. The regional Fish and Game Council to give every person or organisation in making any submission a chance to be heard in support of the submission.
- d. The regional Fish and Game Council to prepare a summary of the submissions received on the draft.
- e. The regional Fish and Game Council to send the draft to the Minister with the summary of the submissions and a written statement of any matters of content on which the Director-General and the Council are unable to agree.

5.3.3 The Minister shall approve the draft or send it back to the regional Fish and Game Council for further consideration before approval.

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