

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 150th MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW
ZEALAND ON WEDNESDAY 18th FEBRUARY 2015 AT 12.00PM**

Present

Murray Ferris, Barry Roderick, Lindsay Lyons, Michael Little, Terry Wood, Peter Storey, Terry Sutton, Steve Scragg, Steve Luscombe, Neal Hawes, Laurence Allingham.

IN ATTENDANCE

Colin Paton (T/T Conservation Board; arrived 12:40pm); Michel Dedual (Department of Conservation); Andy Garrick, Lloyd Gledhill, Kate Thompson, Nigel Simpson, Lynne Sands, Mark Sherburn, Anthony van Dorp, Matt Osborne, (Eastern Fish & Game); Ian Pirani, Ray Bushell, and Ken Coombes.

1.0 WELCOME

1.1 Cr Murray Ferris opened the meeting at 12.00pm and welcomed Council, staff, Michel Dedual (Department of Conservation), and members of the public Ian Pirani, Ken Coombes and Ray Bushell.

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 There were no apologies for the 150th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council.

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (26 NOVEMBER 2014)

3.1 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Mike Little) that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2014 are confirmed as true and correct. [15/02/3.1]*

3.2 Identification of resolutions for inclusion in Council Policy.

3.3 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Mike Little) that the following items be incorporated into Council Policy:*

- *The season regulations for mallard and grey duck combined are set using population size (Threshold Management) [14/11/9.3];*
- *A set of "restricted" season conditions apply when the estimated mean population level is $\leq 400,000$ and "relaxed" conditions when the mean population estimate is greater than 400,000 [14/11/9.4];*
- *Six mallard and grey ducks (combined) per day with a season length of four weeks plus Queens Birthday will apply in 2015 if conditions are "restrictive", and six mallard and grey duck (combined) per day with a six week season will apply if conditions are "relaxed" [14/11/9.5];*
- *Staff use the summer monitoring programme to set season conditions for non greylards [14/11/9.6];*
- *One hen pheasant per day be allowed over Opening Weekend only [14/11/9.9];*
- *Ducks may be hunted on upland game properties on non commercial hunting days provided that there is no commercial or pecuniary gain associated in doing so [14/11/9.11];*
- *The exclusive use period for balloted stands in the Eastern Region for a four week season be reduced to include the first two weekends of May and days in between, and that for season conditions longer than four weeks the exclusive*

use period will be the first three weekends of May and days in between [14/11/9.13]. [15/02/3.3]

4.0 MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 Cr Laurence Allingham expressed his disappointment at the decision to allow harvesting of hen pheasants on opening weekend of the 2015 game season having not been present when this was discussed. Colin Paton also relayed the Wildfowlers Association's concerns over this resolution.
- 4.2 Cr Murray Ferris queried Andy Garrick about the row boat situation at Waikareiti. Andy Garrick advised that the Department of Conservation (Director of Conservation Partnerships for the Central North Island) had informed him that the decision to halt the hire of row boats was made by the Tuhoe Board, not the department, and that he understood it to be a temporary arrangement based on Health and Safety concerns following a search and rescue incident on the lake. Andy advised that he will endeavour to meet with the Board and get this item on the agenda in addition to others.
- 4.3 Cr Terry Wood queried whether staff had responded to an email sent by Andrew Perring claiming he had not received a response from Fish & Game in relation to matters he had raised concerning the row boats. Andy Garrick advised that both Matt Osborne and he had responded twice and had received follow up emails from Andrew.
- 4.4 Cr Murray Ferris queried the progress on a response to the petition submitted by David Dods regarding early spawning rainbows and other perceived issues at Waikaremoana. Andy Garrick confirmed that a substantive response had been prepared and forwarded to Mr Dods.

5.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

- Terry Wood – 2015/16 plastic/paper licences.

6.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

- 6.1 No conflict of interest items were identified.

7.0 COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 7.1 Andy Garrick opened the council priorities discussion advising that this was the first stage in the planning process for the 2015-16 operational year. Andy sought an indication from Council whether it wished to endorse existing priorities or opt for some changes to these in the next OWP. Andy advised that Council feedback from this meeting will be used to commence the development of next year's plan for further consideration at Council's April meeting.
- 7.2 *More Waterfowl:* Cr Mike Little asked whether it was appropriate to consider a new approach, given that duck populations are continuing to decline despite efforts made over the past number of years to identify what is contributing to the decline? Council and staff discussed a wide range of issues that might be affecting populations and essentially the issues identified fell into two groups - those that were out of our control such as climatic conditions and other environmental factors, and those that we had the potential to influence such as predators and hunting methods. The results of the recent banding programme were discussed briefly as was the effectiveness of last season's restricted bag limits.
- 7.3 Council agreed that a renewed focus on productivity and habitat quality was important particularly with the current Mallard Research Project underway. Colin Paton asked if there had been a report on the research to date and Andy Garrick confirmed that there had been an interim report to the NZ Council, and that one of the key findings to date

- was a disturbingly high predation rate. Cr Barry Roderick queried whether the term "More Waterfowl" was particularly appropriate, and Andy Garrick advised that he would consider an alternative for discussion at the next meeting.
- 7.4 Cr Barry Roderick suggested Council look at an additional meeting to specifically address strategic planning matters and suggested that this could be appropriate for next year with the new Council coming in. Cr Lindsay Lyons, who had recently attended an Otago Council meeting, advised that the Otago Council typically put aside a day to consider its strategies going into each new financial year. Andy Garrick agreed that while the OWP discussions provided a one year plan there was a need for more strategic planning over a longer term e.g. five years to fill the 'gap' between the 10 year sports fish and game management plan, and the annual OWP.
- 7.5 Cr Steve Scragg requested a report from staff on the effects of unpinned autos on duck harvest.
- 7.6 *Maximising Fishery Opportunities:* Council supported the proposal to increase monitoring in Lake Waikaremoana via creel surveys, walk up fish and redd counts, diary packs and a datawatch liberation, noting that more frequent monitoring would provide a more useful data set than the current five yearly summer programme. Andy Garrick confirmed that staff considered the current monitoring programme to be insufficient and an increase in monitoring could be tied in with other work to make it cost effective.
- 7.7 Cr Barry Roderick congratulated staff on their 2014 winter creel survey work and queried the size difference between hatchery reared and wild trout. Matt Osborne provided some detail on the effectiveness of the staggered liberation programme which has had an effect on the size of trout caught at various times of the year. He said that the 2014-15 opening day results had shown a reduction in average size which may have been contributed to by the later November and December releases. Matt confirmed that overall the programme had been successful in lowering mortality and in time there could be a need to drop the December liberation and spread those fish across the September, October and November periods. Cr Neal Hawes agreed that despite seeing a smaller average size he had seen better bags and the benefits of an extended season.
- 7.8 Matt Osborne added that wild fish tend to spawn later than hatchery reared fish resulting in smaller wild stock and that environmental impacts within the lakes will also contribute to this.
- 7.9 Cr Lindsay Lyons commented on the region's downturn in licence sales and felt that more could be done to engage with our licence agents, for example by inviting them to attend Council meetings and the Annual Public meeting. Kate Thompson advised that the proposed introduction of new licence categories for the next fishing season will impact on the region's fish licence sales and whether this impact will be positive remains to be seen. Andy Garrick noted that the Rotorua Lakes fishery had previously been promoted by Destination Rotorua or its predecessors, but there appeared to have been a significant shift in recent years to the promotion of other activities such as mountain biking, endurance, and other events. He said that it would be good to establish a closer relationship with the Rotorua Lakes Council with a view to elevating awareness and advertising of lake fisheries, and suggested it would be timely to repeat an economic assessment of the fishery.
- 7.10 Cr Barry Roderick raised the issue of access to the Kaingaroa forest which he considered to be one of the region's prime summer angling locations. With limited summer access he suggested it might be appropriate to redirect resources to alternative access projects. Matt Osborne informed Council that a good proportion of the

Kaingaroa track maintenance work currently undertaken is by contractors who are paid by Timberlands direct. He said that the remaining work was undertaken by staff and felt that it was necessary to continue the upkeep of these tracks.

8.0 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

8.1 That Council confirm the appointment of officers for the 2015 year.

8.2 Cr Murray Ferris left the Chair and Andy Garrick called for nominations for the position of Chairman.

8.3 *Moved (Barry Roderick/Lindsay Lyons) that Cr Murray Ferris be nominated for Council Chairman. [15/02/8.3]*

8.4 There were no further nominations.

8.5 *Moved (Steve Scragg/Laurence Allingham) that nominations be closed. [15/02/8.5]*

8.6 Cr Murray Ferris was duly elected to the position of Chairman.

8.7 Nominations were called for the position of deputy Chairman.

8.8 *Moved (Murray Ferris/Steve Luscombe) that Lindsay Lyons be nominated for Deputy Chairman. [15/02/8.8]*

8.9 There were no further nominations.

8.10 *Moved (Steve Scragg/Laurence Allingham) that nominations for Deputy Chairman be closed. [15/02/8.10]*

8.11 Lindsay Lyons was duly elected to the position of Deputy Chairman.

8.12 Nominations were called for the New Zealand Council appointee.

8.13 *Moved (Steve Scragg/Steve Luscombe) that Cr Lindsay Lyons be nominated for NZ Council appointee. [15/02/8.13]*

8.14 There were no further nominations.

8.15 *Moved (Murray Ferris/Neal Hawes) that nominations for NZ Council appointee be closed. [15/02/8.15]*

8.16 Cr Lindsay Lyons was duly elected to the position of NZ Council appointee.

8.17 Council discussed the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Charitable Trust (WCEECT) appointment.

8.18 *Agreed (Steve Luscombe/Terry Wood) that Matt McDougall be re-appointed to the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust. [15/02/8.18]*

8.19 There was no requirement for the election of the Manager's Performance and Remuneration Committee as this is a 3 year term. This prompted a query as to why elected positions are not for a three year period also? Council accepted that with an election due a one year term was appropriate, and a one year term allowed for more flexibility for Councillors taking up these positions.

8.20 Andy Garrick informed Council that he had attended the recent meeting of the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee which Rob Pitkethley had formerly been a member of as New Zealand Fish and Game Council representative. The Fish & Game representative is appointed by the Minister of Conservation subject to a recommendation from the NZ Council. If the Eastern Fish and Game wishes Andy to take that role, a letter of recommendation will need to be submitted to the NZ Council.

8.21 *Agreed (Terry Sutton/Terry Wood) that Council supports our continued involvement with the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee and that a recommendation be made to the NZ Council that Andy Garrick be the Ministerial appointee. [15/02/8.21]*

9.0 2015 MEETING SCHEDULE

9.1 Council considered the proposed 2015 Meeting dates. Council confirmed that the meeting to be held on the East Coast would be held in Wairoa and that it would be

prudent to bring this meeting forward to August 2015 with the Council Election due to occur in October.

9.2 Council discussed scheduling a field trip and agreed that it would be appropriate to discuss this in November with the newly Elected Council. Duck banding in January was suggested as an option.

9.3 *Agreed: (Mike Little/Neal Hawes) that meeting dates for 2015 will be as set out below; [15/02/9.3]*

Confirmed 2015 meeting dates

	Date	Venue	Issues
1	18 February, 2015	Rotorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Priorities
2	15 April, 2015	Rotorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OWP (initial draft)
3	10 June, 2015	Rotorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licence Fee • OWP (2nd Draft) • Anglers Notice (review)
4	19 August, 2015	Wairoa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise OWP
5	21 October, 2015	Rotorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game Conditions (initial consideration) • Draft Annual Report
6	18 November, 2015	Rotorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise Game Conditions
Annual	18 November, 2015	Rotorua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report
Inaugural Meeting of New Council	18 November, 2015		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elect Chairperson and appointee to NZC • Induction documents • Date for first meeting in 2016

10.0 2014 UPLAND GAME PROPERTIES REPORT

10.1 Andy Garrick informed Council that the Upland Game Properties Report would have normally been submitted to Council in November, but due to incomplete returns from several of the permit holders this had been delayed until now. Cr Steve Scragg queried whether the returns had been submitted within the required time. Andy advised that all but one had, the main issue was lack of clarity or omission of detail and he will be endeavouring to ensure this doesn't happen again this year.

10.2 *Agreed (Steve Scragg/Steve Luscombe) that Council receives the 2014 Upland Game Properties Report. [15/02/10.2]*

10.3 Conservation Board Member, Colin Paton, advised it appeared DOC may have issued a permit to liberate a large number of mallard ducks on a property associated with a registered Upland Game Property. Colin had made an enquiry to DOC but the department had not confirmed whether this was the case. Andy Garrick advised Council that Fish & Game had not been consulted, and staff were incredulous that this might have occurred. Andy noted that while DOC retained this permitting function along with others, it was not unreasonable to expect the department to liaise with Fish & Game, particularly in light of the location and number of birds (1,200?) involved in this situation. Andy confirmed that he had made a formal enquiry with the Department of Conservation to clarify the situation but had not yet had a response.

11.0 WAEWAETUTUKI NOVICE HUNTING PROGRAMME

11.1 Council supported the proposal put together by staff, to utilise the Waewaetutuki wetland in the 2015 Game Season for introduction of novices to game bird hunting. Councillor Murray Ferris added that this proposal would provide both adult and junior novices the opportunity to take part in a sport that they might not normally have access to.

11.2 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Steve Luscombe) that Council endorses the proposed programme for novice hunters at the Waewaetutuki wetland during the 2015 Game Bird season. [15/02/11.2]*

12.0 SPECIES MONITORING REPORT

12.1 *Agreed (Terry Wood/Terry Sutton) that Council receives the Rotorua Lakes 2014 Winter Creel Survey report. [15/02/12.1]*

13.0 WAIKAREMOANA SPORTS FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT FUND

13.1 Andy Garrick advised that following a review of fisheries habitat enhancement opportunities within the Wairoa catchment, and the proposal to fund willow and/or poplar control, staff had come to the conclusion that the \$20,000 allocated for enhancement works in the catchment could be put to much better use if directed towards other projects in the catchment. There were excellent opportunities to improve access to the upper Waikaretaheke, put additional signage into the Waiau, and open up opportunities in the Putere Lakes. Andy felt that it would be far more cost effective to channel resources to access related projects including the production of an access brochure for the Wairoa catchment. Cr Steve Scragg inquired about the outcome of a previous request to improve angler access to the Aniwaniwa above the bridge. Matt Osborne advised that this area had been considered but there was very little in the way of fishing waters and fish to warrant the effort required.

13.2 *Agreed (Mike Little/Peter Storey) that Council approves the change in emphasis from habitat enhancement (willow control) to enhancement of access and the production of a Wairoa Catchment Fisheries brochure. [15/02/13.2]*

14.0 LIAISON OFFICER REPORTS

14.1 Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board

Colin Paton advised that he had very little to report as the primary focus of the Board's most recent meeting was on cycling. He did however advise that they were in the process of forming a Central North Island Sika Foundation and that he had been appointed to the panel. The objective of this group was to improve both habitat and the quality of the herd within the Kaimaniwa ranges.

14.2 Bay of Plenty Conservation Board

Not represented. Ian Pirani noted that there may be merit in having a Fish & Game Councillor representative attend the Board's meetings as the Conservation Board person appointed to attend Fish & Game meetings may not have sufficient understanding of Fish & Game's interests to report back to the Board.

14.3 East Coast Conservation Board

Not represented.

14.4 Department of Conservation, Central North Island Region

Michel Dedual informed Council of the recent issues experienced by Taupo licence holders and agents with the introduction of DOC's new electronic licensing system. He said that while a few agents had been very vocal and concerned, most of the feedback to date had been positive. Michel also spoke briefly about a new project to

understand the dynamics of the Tongariro catchment and factors affecting juvenile rainbow trout. He said that juveniles through the trap were currently being monitored by electronic tags and there was an indication that juvenile brown trout were pushing juvenile rainbows downstream. Michel confirmed that the Taupo fishing has been excellent over the summer period and that the smelt population had increased significantly on the back of a 2012 zooplankton explosion. He said that the brown trout fishery was also booming, and that 3,000 more licences had been issued over the summer period than had been last year.

14.5 Report from the New Zealand Council

Cr Lindsay Lyons advised that the New Zealand Council had not met since November, but that he and Bryce had met with the Minister Maggie Barry. He spoke of a very positive meeting and her willingness to keep communication channels open with Fish & Game. Lindsay had also attended the recent Otago Fish and Game Council meeting in his role as Chairman of the New Zealand Council. He said that he found the Otago Council to be a very proactive group with its members passionate about their region. Lindsay spoke about their issues associated with abstraction of water and the significant irrigation being sourced from aquifers. Lindsay felt that his attendance was worthwhile, and he could see clear benefits of working proactively together with other regions. This could include Councillors from neighbouring regions attending each other's meetings from time to time.

15.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT

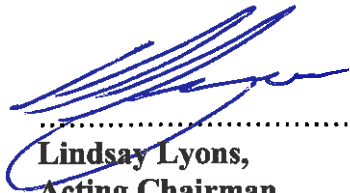
- 15.1** Andy Garrick provided Council with an update on the Ohau Channel wall following his recent meeting with Regional Council. He outlined issues associated with determining whether the wall was having an effect on the fishery or whether there were other factors influencing the movement of smelt and trout. Andy advised that Regional Council is convening a public meeting in May and members of the independent expert advisory panel would be present, as would Fish & Game staff. This would be a good opportunity for anglers to have their view heard. Cr Terry Wood queried whether there was any discussion on having a fish pass put into the wall. Andy advised that he had raised this possibility with Regional Council staff and suggested it might be appropriate to contemplate installation of a fish passage regardless of the findings of the panel given that it is very unlikely the panel will ever be able to conclusively establish the effects of the wall on the fishery within the channel. Michel Dedual, who is a member of the expert panel, confirmed the difficulty in determining whether the wall was having a detrimental effect on the fishery particularly with results showing a best and worst year of fishing post wall. There was currently no firm view and compounding this was the effects the low level of Lake Rotorua and reduced velocity at the weir might be having. Michel confirmed that there was no question smelt were moving through the channel and suggested that the disappearance of smelt last opening mentioned by Cr Barry Roderick may have been a result of movement to Lake Rotorua resulting from lower lake levels and reduced velocity at the weir. Cr Terry Wood asked when the five year survey report was due. Andy Garrick advised that this was currently being prepared by Regional Council. Michel Dedual closed by saying that it is difficult to pin effects on the wall when considerable environmental changes are occurring.
- 15.2** In response to a query from Cr Steve Scragg, Andy Garrick confirmed that the summer monitoring programme indicated the 2015 game season for mallards would comprise a four week season with a six bird daily bag limit.

- 15.3 *Agreed (Steve Scragg/Barry Roderick) that the payments for October, November, and December 2014 totalling \$527,891.67 be approved.[15/02/15.3]*
- 15.4 *Agreed (Steve Scragg/Barry Roderick) that Council approves the revised budget figures for the Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Financial Performance for the 2014-2015 financial year. [15/02/15.4]*
- 16.0 GENERAL BUSINESS**
- 16.1 Cr Lindsay Lyons and Andy Garrick provided an overview of a Federated Farmers Dairy Council meeting taking place in Taupo today which Bryce Johnson had been invited to speak at. Yesterday the group had a field trip which included a visit to Mike Parnwell's dairy farm in Broadlands organised by Eastern Fish & Game. Mike is one of a group of Reporoa farmers who have worked with Alison Dewes to increase profits while reducing inputs, and in addition to farming more sustainably has undertaken other initiatives on his property including the enhancement of wetlands, predator trapping, and more sympathetic management of drains. John Meikle and Alison both spoke at the event and the point was made that Fish & Game was not anti dairy farming per se, as frequently portrayed by the media who continue to use the phrase "dirty dairying", but was supportive of farming where it was undertaken in an environmentally sustainable manner.
- 16.2 Cr Terry Wood queried the possibility of the 0800 Poaching number being incorporated onto the plastic licence as this would be an easy point of reference for anglers who wish to report poaching activity. Kate Thompson responded advising that this would be impractical in that the space available on the licence was too limited to enable this, and the 0800 Poaching phone number was currently only in use by Eastern Fish & Game meaning we could receive calls from all over the country.
- 16.3 Cr Murray Ferris informed Council that he and Andy Garrick were working on the development of a gifting policy which in due course would be submitted to Robert Sowman for consideration for use more widely by Fish & Game if other regions wished to take it up. The policy or guidelines would also address the issue of long service awards to Councillors and others who have contributed their time to Fish & Game. This is an item that has been on the agenda for some time.
- 16.4 Andy Garrick informed Council of the recent purchase of a tractor and mower for reserve maintenance works. He advised that staff from now would be approaching this work in a different way and rather than driving the tractor from one location to another, the tractor would be transported to and from the reserves on a trailer. Currently Andy's personal transport trailer was being utilised for this purpose while staff were locating a suitable unit to purchase. He said that staff had looked at a number of options on the market, and after a period of due diligence had concluded that a second hand trailer offered by Cr Steve Scragg met all of our needs and was competitively priced. Andy noted he was informing Council of this purchase for reasons of transparency given the transaction was being undertaken with Cr Steve Scragg.
- 16.5 Andy Garrick provided Council with an update on the Awahou Stream compliance situation advising that with the increase in temperature in Lake Rotorua large numbers of trout had moved into the stream. He said that this had attracted a lot of anglers and provided some great opportunity, but it had also drawn a lot of undesirable characters to not only the Awahou but the Hamurana and Waiteti Streams also. Andy advised that over the past few weeks 17 offence notices had been issued, mostly for fishing without a licence and/or using illegal methods. Obstructive and aggressive behaviour from offenders well known to the police had been encountered, and for health and

safety reasons a decision had been made that all ranging visits to these sites would be undertaken with three staff in attendance until problems eased off. Anthony van Dorp was liaising closely with police and their support had been excellent to date. Cr Neal Hawes queried what support there had been from the local residents and Nigel Simpson confirmed that they had been very supportive to date.

17.0 MEETING CLOSED

17.1 The meeting was closed at 2.45pm.


.....
Lindsay Lyons,
Acting Chairman

..... 15 April 2015
Date

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (26 NOVEMBER 2014)

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8.0 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

8.3 *Moved (Barry Roderick/Lindsay Lyons) that Cr Murray Ferris be nominated for Council Chairman. [15/02/8.3]*

8.5 *Moved (Steve Scragg/Laurence Allingham) that nominations be closed. [15/02/8.5]*

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9.0 2015 MEETING SCHEDULE

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10.0 2014 UPLAND GAME PROPERTIES REPORT

10.2 *Agreed (Steve Scragg/Steve Luscombe) that Council receives the 2014 Upland Game Properties Report. [15/02/10.2]*

11.0 WAEWAETUTUKI NOVICE HUNTING PROGRAMME

11.2 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Steve Luscombe) that Council endorses the proposed programme for novice hunters at the Waewaetutuki wetland during the 2015 Game Bird season. [15/02/11.2]*

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