

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF

If you require further elaboration or clarification of items contained herein, or any other matters relating to F&GC business, please don't hesitate to contact your local ward councillor or the office

Matters Arising from Council Meeting of 8 April 2017

- Mr Wilson informed Councillors that Katie Gibb was still analysing the blood samples taken from mallard ducks and that the research report would not be available for about 12 months.
- A letter was tabled from the Waikato Regional Council to the Department of Conservation regarding the regional council serving notice of its intention to formally review all conditions of the resource consent for the Whangamarino Weir. The consent for the weir was held jointly by the Department and Fish & Game. Councillors expressed their disappointment that the regional council was initiating a review during the Healthy Rivers Plan Change and at a time when both Fish & Game and DoC were actively working with the regional council and local landowners to produce a catchment management plan for the Whangamarino Wetland.
- Mr Wilson expressed his concerns with the current system of temporary paper tags and especially the presence of an expiry date, which had led to a large number of maimai disputes. Councillors discussed the use of electronic licenses and noted potential difficulties due to:
 - Lack of reception for mobile phones in many areas
 - Privacy issues
 - Inability to charge mobile phones in the field.
- Councillors congratulated staff on producing an excellent preseason game newsletter.
- Mr Wilson emphasised to Councillors the potential benefits arising from the Hauraki Marine Spatial Plan including a commitment by regional authorities to build a large number of wetlands over the next ten years.
- Mr Wilson introduced Council's submission on the Healthy Rivers Plan change noting that similar submissions had been lodged by other environmental agencies and also by some primary sector groups.
- Several Councillors expressed their bewilderment over the recent news release by Federated Farmers criticising Fish & Game for not being more involved in the management of Canada geese and koi carp.
- Mr Wilson presented the OSH Report noting that two bridges in the Aka Aka Wetland had been repaired, and timber had been purchased for a new bridge in the Blythen Wetland.
- Mr Robert Sowman's report on licence sales was discussed with Councillors considering the following recommendations, after Mr Wilson had read out Dr Daniel's written comments.
- Mr Phil Dawson (OSPRI) gave a presentation on their proposed programme for the use of 1080 in the Williamson Wetland. He noted that the programme in the Whangamarino Wetland should eliminate the threat of TB from the area. The proposal included the use of bait stations along the existing tracks in the Williamson Wetland, including an increased in the number of existing bait stations. However away from the tracks the wetland was inaccessible by foot and thus it was impractical to carry out a ground based programme. Therefore Mr Dawson stated that only aerial control could be used away (100m) from the tracks. Both Mr Dyer and Councillor Cocks agreed that access away from the tracks was impractical and possibly dangerous. The Chairman reminded Councillors of Council's existing policy to oppose the aerial application of 1080. It was agreed that Council's policy on the aerial use of 1080 in areas where foot access is impractical be agended for the June 2017 meeting.

Matters Arising From Chief Executive's Report

Drift diving: Despite the horrible weather Adam Daniel was able to drift dive the Waihou, Mangatutu and upper Whakapapa Rivers. The Mangatutu Stream was below the 4m visibility threshold but the dive was still conducted.

Trend Counts: Trend counts for shelduck did not exceed the threshold management guidelines this year to hold a special season in the King Country. Trend counts for the northern part of our district are consistent with previous years, and thus we held a special season for shelduck north of the Harbour Bridge. Also black swan numbers on and around the Kaipara harbour have continued to remain stable after a sudden drop in their numbers some years ago

Healthy Rivers Plan Change: Anna Sintenie has been leading this project and a comprehensive submission was lodged with the Waikato Regional Council.

Inghams consent application: Mischa Davis and David Klee met with Inghams staff, their consultants and lawyer to go over our submission. We are awaiting further correspondence including a revised set of conditions which is due this week.

Pukekohe WWTP: David Klee met with Watercare services staff and their consultants to go over our submission. Some key outstanding issues relate to the proposed increase in Nitrogen and potential impacts on the adjacent F&G wetland.

Waikare/Whangamarino Catchment Management Plan: David and Anna are providing feedback on this plan. We are mindful that these type of non-statutory collaborative plans have in our experience rarely achieved any tangible improvements to ecosystem health in our freshwater bodies.

North & Central Shepherd: Plans to spray yellow flag in the south-west corner of the North Shepherd are being affected by high water levels earlier in the season and then flooding more recently.

Piggott Wetland: We have received approval for our Construction Management Plan for this wetland. However flooding arrived the day afterwards, so it is looking more like November, (based on how long things took to dry out last year), before we can go ahead.

Dean Wetland: Counties Power is proposing to remove 4 power transmission towers they have in this area using a ground crew and a helicopter

Botulism: Botulism has not been such a problem this year. This was confirmed by contacting individuals and organisations that confront and deal with this problem right around our region. It did start to manifest itself at Mangere Waste Water Treatment Plant early in 2017 but these birds, (mallards and parries), have been picked up by Watercare staff in routine patrols and taken to Bird Rescue in Green Bay. (See also Straka's Lagoon).

WCEET Wetland Projects: David is working on helping landowners and clubs put together funding applications for wetland restoration and predator control projects.

Ranging: Adam has checked 6 fishermen at Lake Ngaroto that were all unlicensed. Five of the anglers claimed to be fishing for goldfish but one angler was given a citation for having 10+ rudd in a catch net. Adam checked a guide with three clients on the Whakapapa River and found the guide did not have a licence on him but a licence was produced within 48h.