

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF

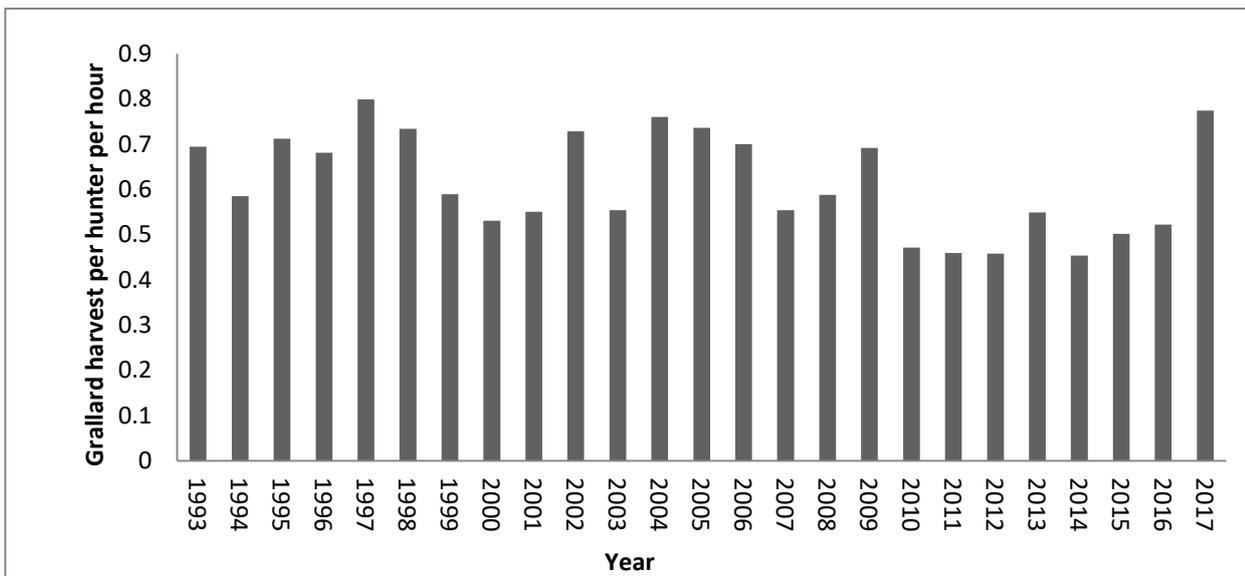
If you require further elaboration or clarification of items contained herein, or any other matters relating to F&GC business, please don't hesitate to contact your local ward councillor or the office

Matters Arising from Council Meeting of 19 August 2017

- Councillor Juby suggested a field trip for Councillors in February 2018 to Taumarunui in conjunction with the February Council meeting, staying at the Owhango Hotel. The objective would be to give Councillors an appreciation of the Whanganui/Whakapapa system. After discussion it was agreed that Councillor Juby would bring a further update to the next meeting of Council.
- Councillor Juby updated Councillors on the Moakurarua River access issue noting that there was an access sign on the road above the river but that access was difficult and not practical. Mr Wilson agreed to pass the information on to the local field officer for the Walking Access Commission.
- Councillor Shaw described his mallard and teal nesting boxes, which had been very successful with low predation rates.
- Councillor Annan commented that the Te Awamutu sewage treatment plant is already struggling and simply does not have the capacity to take effluent from the Waikeria Prison.
- Discussion was held on the proposed clean-fill site near Pokeno, upstream of F&G wetlands, with it noted that the application is currently on hold while the applicant provides further information.
- Councillors S & B Smith updated the meeting on the recent flooding in the Piako/Waitoa system and the impact of the weirs installed to maintain wetland conditions and hunting opportunities.
- Councillors considered the proposed Code of Conduct for Sports Fishing from Robert Sowman, NZ Council Policy & Planning Manager. Councillor Juby described the proposed Code of Conduct as very South Island centred especially in regards to limiting the number of fish caught and released. It was agreed that Councillor Juby would provide written comments to Mr Wilson to forward to NZ Council.
- The Memorandum on budget policy by Alison Lyall, NZF&GC Financial Manager, was discussed. Councillors expressed their opposition to the proposed policy emphasising that it was against the principle of autonomy of the regions and reduced the incentive for regions to seek external funding. Councillors were especially concerned that expenditure from restricted and dedicated revenues would have to be approved as part of the budget round and that interest from such revenues would be included as income in the budget process.
- The high variability observed in the aerial transect counts of mallard ducks were noted with agreement that several more years of data was required before any trends could be determined. Councillors then discussed the mallard banding programme and agreed that this was providing valuable data that couldn't be provided by aerial transects.
- Councillor Sherrard observed that swan numbers in the north Waikato were well up from previous winters. Other Councillors agreed and it was suggested that swans had moved out onto farmland as there was little food available in wetlands due to the impact of recent floods.
- Councillor Annan informed that at a recent Ward 6 meeting it was reported that anglers fishing the Upper Awakino River were catching a lot of spent fish and the question was asked as to whether the season length was too long. Mr Wilson replied that long-term monitoring by the drift dive surveys had shown no decline in the trout fishery due to the extended season and that recruitment was directly related to autumn floods.

Matters Arising From Chief Executive's Report

Game Bird Harvest Survey: At the time of writing we are about to embark on the final GBHS of the year. Despite the mixed reports from hunters due to the abnormal rainfall conditions we experienced this summer and autumn, it appears that the average grallard harvest per hunter is the best we have had for some years. It would seem that the guys who had an average or below par season were more than offset by hunters that had an extremely good season. When this is put in context of average effort the results are even more impressive as the average harvest of 15.3 ducks per hunters was achieved in lowest average effort ever recorded at 19.7 hours. This results in one of the highest harvest rates in terms of grallards per hunter per hour. It should be noted that high harvest rates are not necessarily a surrogate for high population and population data will be presented once we have all our band return and reporting rate information.



RMA Issues: Staff were actively involved in the following RMA activities:

- Lake Waikare/Whangamarino Consent Review
- Waikato Freshwater Strategy
- Healthy Rivers Plan Change
- Lake Waikare/Whangamarino Catchment Management Plan
- Mill Drain clearance Lake Waikare
- Pukekohe Waste Water Treatment Plant discharge consents
- Future Proof Strategy
- Clevedon quarry expansion consents
- Hyndman's quarry expansion consents
- Ingham Chicken Processing Plant consent
- Waikeria Prison Expansion Project
- Proposed Cleanfill site at Bluff Road near Pokeno

WCEET Wetland Projects: David Klee lodged funding applications in conjunction with landowners and F&G clubs in order to restore wetland habitat and conduct predator control. All wetland projects were approved in full and a total of \$79,000 secured from WCEET.

Waipapa River: Adam Daniel ordered and received the new self-closing deer fence gates and signs to improve access to the Waipapa River on the existing legal access.

Hauraki Plains Floods: We've had several discussions with the WRC over the flooding last autumn on the Hauraki Plains. An issue is the impact of weirs installed by F&G & hunters on the flood storage capacity of the Kopuatai Wetland & Flax Block. The WRC is currently modelling the impact of the weirs and there may need to be some changes in their management.