

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held at the
NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton,
on Saturday 18 June 2016 commencing at 11a.m.

AGENDA

	<u>Page</u>
1. Apologies	
2. Possible conflicts of interest arising from meeting agenda	
3. Minutes of previous meetings held on 9 th April 2016 *	1
4. Matters arising from previous minutes	
5. Council correspondence (nil as of 7/06/2016)	
6. Chief Executive's bi-monthly report & financial statements	
6.1 Bi-monthly Chief Executives Report *	5
6.2 Financial Statements *	16
7. 2016/17 Licence fee recommendation*	48
8. Decisions that impinge on other councils*	51
9. Hunting and harvest ethics*	54
10. Temporary claim stands*	57
11. Nominations for the NZ Game Bird Habitat Trust Board*	58
12. Recommendations of SI working party on angling regs*	59
13. Health & Safety Policy *	73
14. OSH Report *	77
15. NZF&GC meeting 18 - 20 March 2016	
16. General Business	

* Denotes attachments

M. Young
Chairman
30/05/2016

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton,
on Saturday 9th April 2016 commencing at 11.00am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: M. Young

Councillors: G. Annan, C. Carey, D. Cocks, W. Howard, N. Juby, A. Kerr, P. Shaw,
C. Sherrard, B. Smith, S. Smith, E. Williamson.

Staff: B. Wilson, J. Dyer.

Visitors: P. Hardy (DoC)

1. APOLOGIES

D. Klee, A. Daniel

It was moved;

that the apologies be accepted.

Annan/Kerr CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 13 FEBRUARY 2016:

Two corrections were noted.

(1) Councillor Kerr was in attendance at the meeting.

(2) Councillor Annan did not move the motion that apologies be accepted as he did not arrive at the meeting until later.

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of 13 February 2016 as corrected be accepted as a true and correct record.

B. Smith/Carey CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Mr Wilson informed Councillors that he had asked other F&G Councils about their Trust audit fees and they were similar or more expensive than that paid for the LWHT accounts.

5. CORRESPONDENCE:

Councillors discussed the letter from Andrea Thomas, Forest Manager for the Woodhill Forest. Councillors expressed their disappointment that the Woodhill Forest would no

longer be open to gamebird hunters. Mr Dyer confirmed that deer hunters were paying \$150 for a day permit compared to the \$25 that was paid by gamebird hunters last year. Councillor Cocks emphasised that there had never been an accident in the forest involving gamebird hunters.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

In response to a question, Paul Hardy stated that discussions continued between DoC and the Waikato Regional Council over the Lake Waikare discharge. A complicating factor was that the Whangamarino weir was not considered to be compliant with its resource consent.

Councillors Cocks and Williamson expressed their considerable concerns over the discharge from the Max Brit sawmill to Lake Waikare. Mr Wilson agreed and noted that staff were currently consulting with Max Brit and Lumbercorp over their discharges to Lake Waikare.

Councillor Carey asked for an update on the issue of permits to release gamebirds. He reminded councillors that DoC was charging \$450 for a permit and he considered that it would be a vast improvement if the issuing of permits could be delegated to F&G. Mr Wilson replied that the Manager of Eastern F&G, Andy Garrick, was currently consulting with DoC over this issue. Mr Wilson agreed to provide an update at the June Council meeting.

Councillor Sherrard asked for an update on the botulism outbreak in the region. Mr Wilson replied that small outbreaks had occurred throughout the region but that a potentially large outbreak on the Firth of Thames had been avoided thanks to the efforts of Mr Dyer who arranged for the carcasses to be removed.

It was moved;

that the CE Bimonthly report and Financial Statements be accepted.

Annan/B. Smith CARRIED

7. TREND FLIGHTS:

Discussion took place on the increase in geese numbers since management was taken away from F&G. Large populations were becoming established at many sites throughout the region.

Discussion took place on the gifting of gamebirds with it noted that there had been no changes to the legislation.

8. ACCESS TO WAIPA RIVER AT TOA BRIDGE:

Councillors Annan and Carey reported on their visit to the landowners at Toa Bridge. Unfortunately access to the public was still being denied but it was considered worthwhile to maintain contact with the French family.

Mr Wilson reported that Oio Farms was on the market and that he had already approached the Walking Access Commission expressing F&G's considerable interest in this property in case the property was sold to overseas buyers. Oio Farms held 14km of frontage on the Whakapapa River.

9. FUTURE OF MALLARD RESEARCH:

Mr Wilson introduced the report noting that there was strong support for mallard research from the F&G Managers and the other regions. General discussion followed on the mallard research programme with it emphasised that it should continue to be a national priority.

10. DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2016/17 BUDGET AND OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN:

Discussion took place on the 2016/17 budget with agreement over the need for a RMA Officer, possibly shared with Northland F&G. Mr Wilson reported that he would also be seeking that the interest from the funds held on behalf of the Williamson Wetland pondholders were retained rather than contributing towards the national budget.

It was moved;

that Council request funding from the national budgeting process for the establishment of a RMA Officer in the Auckland/Waikato region.

Cocks/Williamson CARRIED

It was moved;

that the 2016/17 Operational Work Plan and Budget of \$716,839 (not including applications of \$78,000) be approved.

Cocks/Carey CARRIED

11. OSH REPORT:

Councillors discussed the impact of the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015, which came into force on April 4, 2016. It was noted that the Act had little impact on volunteers but there were significant implications for the employment of staff.

Mr Dyer, in reply to a question, observed that the new boat was called Gracilis (Latin for "slender"), after the species name for Grey Teal.

It was moved;

that the OSH Report for April be accepted.

Cocks/Williamson CARRIED

12. NZF&GC MEETING 18-20 MARCH 2016:

Councillor Sherrard was unable to attend the meeting but summarised the minutes (unconfirmed). Some discussion followed on the proposed guide licence and the new powers for DoC rangers.

Councillor Cocks expressed his disappointment that when a NZ Councillor couldn't attend a NZF&GC meeting his temporary replacement didn't have voting rights. Mr Wilson agreed to review the legislation on such events and report back to Council.

Mr Wilson agreed to check with the national office of NZF&G to confirm that all Councillors were receiving the minutes of NZF&GC meetings.

13. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Mr Dyer reported that the rapid spread of the giant willow aphid was causing a large build-up in the wasp population on Fish & Game wetlands as wasps were feeding on the aphid secretions ("honeydew"). Mr Dyer had already destroyed four wasp nests in the last month.

Mr Dyer informed that he had discovered that many trees in the Piggott Wetland held bat colonies. Mr Dyer had contacted bat experts at Auckland University.

Councillors discussed the game licence sales with some concern expressed that Te Kauwhata no longer had an agent selling game licences.

Concern was expressed that online purchasers of a 2016 game licence did not have the option of enrolling for an election. Mr Wilson agreed to contact the NZF&GC office with these concerns and report back to Council.

Councillor Annan reported on the results of the recent Lake Arapuni Fishing competition held on the 19-20 March.

- 94 entries
- 80 fish weigh ins
- 1.525kg average weight
- Female anglers dominated the major prizes
- Heaviest fish was 2.64kg rainbow
- Only 9 wild rainbows were weighed in.

A koi carp had been observed in the lake and this was concerning as Arapuni had previously been free of this noxious pest.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 1.10pm.

Bi Monthly Managers Report**Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Meeting June 2016**

OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT**Project 1111 Drift diving:**

Adam Daniel has been writing up the drift dive reports focusing on the Whakapapa annual report. Overall there were no issues arising from 2016 drift dive monitoring aside from the poor water quality in the Mangatutu River that will be covered in the RMA section of this report.

Project 5112 Banding:

Staff at F&G are always happy to have banded birds reported, even from the property just down the road from the banding site. In terms of monitoring our duck populations, each and every band properly reported has equal merit. However some returns are quite extraordinary nonetheless. One hunter being interviewed in the Gamebird Hunter (phone) Survey said he'd got a bird around 30 years ago that was banded in Norfolk Island by the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme. The band itself, which he doesn't now have, was marked "Canberra". This event was covered then by the Thames Star. Perhaps this predated present staff as it is not a recovery that immediately comes to mind. Old records are now being consulted. This hunter asked, "How does a bird fly 1,500km over ocean and apparently know exactly where it is heading?" That's a very good question!

Project 1113 Mallard Transects

David Klee and Matt McDougal from Eastern conducted trend flights for mallards throughout the Eastern, Reporoa, Auckland/Waikato and Northland regions. As councillors will be aware, we are moving towards a management approach that will use underlying biological and climatic drivers to manage our duck populations, rather than arbitrary regional boundaries. As such David, Matt McDougall, and possibly staff from Taranaki, the Hawkes Bay and Northland will be developing monitoring plans where DMUs (Duck management units) overlap regional council boundaries. The project to determine spatial distributions of sub populations based on band returns in order to help validate DMU boundaries is also underway. If this proves useful we will do the same, which will require going through all the banding records and entering grid references for hunter returns. With over 7000 returns this would take some time and effort. We plan to continue with transects and compare results to banding data which will be used to validate the approaches being used. David and Matt will work collaboratively on producing the report.

Project 1115 Population Surveys

Spawning surveys: Adam conducted three preliminary spawning surveys on Arapuni tributaries and the upper Mangatutu River. There were no spawning fish spotted on the Mangatutu and only tributary C had substantial spawning habitat on Lake Arapuni. Unfortunately the vegetation is so thick around trib. C it would take up to 30h to clear vegetation and a permit would likely be needed. Budgeting time for this exercise in 2017 will be necessary to complete meaningful surveys.

Project 1117 Gamebird Research

Adam assisted Jenn Sheppard in repairing some equipment that was to be returned to the US.

PhD Project Mallard Productivity: We have wrapped up the field component of the project, packed up all the loan equipment and shipped it back to Canada. Jenn Sheppard has headed back home for a few weeks of well-earned R & R with the family, although she is also working on finishing the first published piece of work looking at the effects of capture and handling times. Jenn will then travel to spend time with her external supervisor Dr Arnold and will get down to the nitty gritty statistical analysis which will involve some complex modelling work which both her external supervisors specialise in. Jenn will return in October to complete her write-up and continue publishing another 3-4 papers.

Masters Project Heavy Metal Concentrations. A big thanks to all the hunters who have helped us collect carcasses from within our study area during the hunting season. These have now been transported down to Massey and Katie Gibb will be collecting gizzard, tissue and feather samples. We are in the process of applying for external grants and scholarships in order to augment the budget that we have available from the research fund. A small sub-sample of bloods has also been sent to the lab in order to determine which metals are most prevalent and therefore priorities our sampling regime.

Project 1121 Fish Harvest Assessment:

Trail Cameras: Adam revisited the Oio farms site to fix a broken camera and changed batteries in the main stem Whakapapa sites in April. The Angler Use study will be completed at the end of June and all cameras will be removed between June and December when weather and time permits.

Project 1161 Trout Releases

Releases: Adam conducted the Moana-nui, Whatihua and Parkinson fish releases in May with all releases going well. Lake Parkinson water level is low and concerning. A Regional Council Survey revealed that the lake has very high densities of bullies suggesting the release of brown trout would be productive.

Fish Tanker: Adam has undertaken a project to rebuild the release system on the fish tanker in anticipation of an increased load of 2-year-old fish. The upgrade included fixing the release valve and constructing a 6m release tube.

Project 5172 Game Gazette:

Maimai Disputes: This time of year we often have to sort out maimai disputes. It often comes down to an exact legal interpretation as to who has rightful authority. The Parliamentary Counsel Office, who look after the online NZ statutes, has been very helpful in explaining some of the oddities of how old legislation, (i.e. in our case, the 1955 Wildlife Regulations), is displayed online. This has helped us make a better informed call on how our regulations can be applied in the field.

Day Licences: One hunter complained that this was the first year of the 10 he'd just hunted opening weekend, that he had to buy a full season licence to do so. Previously he'd just got a temporary licence from sports shops but the online licence sale wouldn't let him repeat this.

He was told he was jolly lucky to have got away with it the other 9 years and did he want to make up the revenue shortfall? Fortunately everyone had a sense of humour, but is he the only one?

Project 1181 Gamebird control:

Vermin Control: A very detailed 'how-to' illustrated article on trapping vermin, mostly using Fenn traps, has been drawn up by John Dyer to put on the F&G website. This is to stimulate the interest being generated in predator control by competitions like Hunting & Fishing's 'Swamp Comp' and Franklin Fish & Games' Pukeko Shoot and Predator Competition. This article draws together information from a diverse range of authorities on the subject, from both NZ and also the UK. A lot of this has probably never been put in print before. Everything from how to prepare traps before using them, to how trap-tunnel height plays a vital role. The article reveals that using motor oil on traps is a mistake as stoats, which have acute senses, have been videoed refusing to enter a trapping tunnel when they detected the oil. A much better alternative to make traps faster and hence more effective is unscented candle wax, such as National Candles make in Wellington, NZ. John has also imported a food-grade trap-oil made by the gun-oil people Ballstol. It has no odour, no taste and works from -50 to +150C. DoC especially should look into its use in NZ. There is a lot of other advice and anyone trapping, regardless of which type of trap they're using, should find plenty of help to make their efforts more efficient and rewarding.

John has also been experimenting with a water resistant polymer-infused feral cat/mustelid lure manufactured in Christchurch by Animal Control Research. This has a round hole in each pellet which can easily be slipped onto a Timms trap bait-bar. This makes it ideal for people who use this popular trap for ferrets etc. They can also use ½ a small apple to catch possums or even use both baits together to cover their bases.

Pukeko Poisoning: Fish & Game liaised with SPCA who were following up allegations of a person poisoning pukeko. He had previously threatened to poison these birds. In the process he apparently poisoned his neighbours' cat. The problem of unwanted by-kill is a big one when poison is being used carelessly.

Pukeko Control: We frequently get calls from people in urban Auckland to remove pukekos that live in nearby estuaries or creeks. Often they admit that they fed the chicks "because they were cute". But the birds then lost fear of humans and pets and started attacking people judged to be in their territory. Some people are practical and just want to know if one of their family can use an airgun to sort things out. Others are less so and want Fish & Game to take these birds away for them. However when they have been relocated as far away as 80km in the past they have invariably come back. As they were banded at the same time, there is no doubt that they were the same birds. F&G is not funded to do such work, which is really a job for a pest control firm in urban areas or for gamebird hunters in more rural areas.

OUTPUT 2 HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

Project 1211 R.M.A.

Wallace Corporation discharge to the Waitoa River: After a good outcome at the local body hearing it is perhaps no surprise that Wallace Corporation have chosen to appeal the decision. Despite this, it is disappointing that an organisation that is marketing itself on environmental sustainability would appeal a decision that would require them to achieve targeted reductions to the amounts of nutrients being deposited in our freshwater ecosystems

over time. The appeal indicates the Wallace Corporation do not accept that there is a more than minor effect on the environment and that achieving the commissioners conditions in relation to nitrogen discharge in particular would require upgrades to the wastewater treatment system. Instead Wallace corporation propose consent limits which would allow for substantial increases in total nitrogen loading from the current discharge. We have lodged a section 274 notice, becoming a party to proceedings. We have indicated that we are willing to negotiate prior to any environment court hearing, however, need to prepare for a hearing and lodge a funding application with national council.

Lake Waikare/Whangamarino Flood Scheme: David has attended two workshops focused on hydrology and sedimentation. It now appears that ICM are willing to asses options which are technically 'out of scope' of the review and the current appeal. This is an interesting change of tact, given that throughout this entire process ICM have attempted to constrain the scope as much as possible.

OCD Submission: A submission has been lodged opposing the re-consenting of the Waitoa Open Country Dairy factory site. Subsequently we have met with OCD staff who have indicated that they wish to re-think their approach. Instead of pressing ahead with the current application OCD are now seeking to lodge a short term 2-3 year consent, with reduced discharge limits while their application is revamped. We are exploring the option of signing an MOU with the company in order to map out a pathway for the re-consenting process.

Ingham's pre application liaison: Further comments have been sent to Inghams regarding their consent application. It has been reiterated that increasing discharges is unpalatable and we have asked them to come back to us once they can substantiate step-wise, targeted improvements over the life span of the consent.

Max Birt and Lumbercorp: Ongoing discussion with both companies in regards to re-consenting of their discharge next to Lake Waikare.

AFFCO: The December independent hearing on the AFFCO discharge into the Waikato River was favourable with the commissioners settling on significant reductions in the AFFCO discharge that would all but rule out the addition of a dairy factory at the site unless the discharge is put to land. Corina Jordan and Adam Daniel gave expert evidence at the hearing along with iwi and council partners. The process helped unite Tainui, Waikato Regional Council and Fish & Game on a common goal to clean up the Waikato River. Unfortunately AFFCO has appealed at the Environment Court level and Fish & Game are a party to the appeal. We have applied for national funding to cover the costs of the upcoming case.

Fonterra: Adam and I met with Fonterra to discuss the consent renewals for the Te Rapa, Tirau and Te Awamutu dairy factories. Fonterra are mostly compliant and willing to make necessary reductions in discharge nutrients.

Waihou Catchment: Adam has had ongoing discussions with Regional Council staff about works in the Waihou catchment. Adam attended a meeting with Councillor Nigel Juby on mass willow removal and monitoring. The impact of willow removal was covered by NIWA staff showing 1/3 reduction in native fish with willow removal. Adam has followed up by requesting that the council either prove they are not having an effect on fish populations or that they mitigate for that effect and consider the impact on waterfowl. The council has responded by indicating that they will start to include the installation of large wood or structures to mitigate for the loss of habitat caused by willow removal.

Waipa Catchment: Adam has had ongoing and sometimes heated discussions with Regional Council staff about works in the Waipa catchment. Adam attended a meeting and fieldtrip to a Honakiwi site to view newly installed instream habitat that was installed at Fish & Game's request. In addition Council staff retained an oxbow on the site (waterfowl habitat) and left a scour pool for fish habitat. This is a complete shift from the "get stuffed" attitude Council staff held about mitigating for the loss of fish habitat just three years ago. Adam will be doing a positive article on Council Works to celebrate the improvement in river management.

South Waikato: Adam conducted a review of SWEI funding applications for planting projects in the South Waikato. There were no bad choices and we recommended prioritising existing projects.

Lake Water Quality: Adam, David and I met with a representative of the iwi from the Taharoa lakes to discuss the potential for working together to improve water quality and enhance wetlands in the Taharoa/southern Kawhia area.

Florida Farms: Adam Daniel has been conducting an ongoing investigation into the legality of the Florida Farms lease on the upper Mangatutu River. Adam has lodged formal complaints about stock in the stream and declining water quality on this property. Adam lodged an Official Information Act request to see the lease with DoC and asked for a "please explain" letter on how the lease could possibly be legal considering the DoC land in question is a scenic reserve.

Project 1221 Council Land

1080 in the Williamson Wetland

OSPRI NZ Ltd is planning a 1080 drop over much of the Whangamarino Wetland, including the Williamson Wetland, later this year. We've consistently told them that F&G will not give authorisation for an aerial drop over our land.

Singer Wetland

A 112 hectare dairy farm east of Pokeno will be coming up for auction soon. The property includes 45ha that has been zoned for subdivision, about 22ha of rural zone, and some 44 hectares of wetland (Singer Wetland). The wetland is adjacent to our Blythen and Cathcart Wetlands. I have contacted the real estate agent and asked him to inform potential buyers that we are interested in purchasing the wetland from the new owners (the current owner was approached some time ago but was not interested in selling). Ownership of this wetland would guarantee a buffer zone between F&G land and the proposed subdivisions, and would also assist water control on our land. The wetland could also easily be restored to maximise duck breeding habitat.

North Shepherd: We noticed some clearance activities on Fish & Game land in the North Shepherd wetland. It appears someone has come through and removed an area of crack willows, the purpose of which is unclear. The wetland was extremely dry, with a number of ponds having little to no water. Identifying ways to increase water levels would be beneficial for this wetland.

North & Central Shepherd: Some of the hunters there have complained of getting stung, often more than once, in the last couple of years. A lot of people have seen on the news a new bait to control wasps and wanted to try it locally. This is Vespex and there are certain controls about its sale. Using the information about spacing baits that is available it seems that it

would cost in the vicinity of \$900 to do the North Shepherd alone. Divided by all the hunters there, it works out around \$50 each. However, as previously described, the wasps have increased markedly in response to a new pest, the giant willow aphid which was accidentally introduced to NZ in 2013. As long as these aphids in their countless millions produce copious amounts of honey dew from willows it seems likely that wasps from outside the area would simply reinvade any wetland after it is treated. To be effective any control would need to be over a very large area and with commensurate costs. The giant willow aphid does have some natural predators in Japan where it seems to have come from. But there are no apparent plans to introduce these here in NZ. Likewise wasps in NZ have been found to carry microscopic mites and this has been linked with having an effect on their nest thrift. Notwithstanding this, nothing appears to be on the horizon to solve this serious problem for hunters (and beekeepers).

Hunters who are at all allergic, or if they are stung in the mouth or on the throat (which could threaten their airways when it swells), should make sure they are well aware of the location of the nearest emergency clinic (such as at Pukekohe), take epi-pens if necessary and make prior plans with hunting mates, family and so on, to anticipate what they would do in an emergency. If an individual nest is right on a walkway, or is otherwise putting hunters at risk, there are a number of options for destroying it.

Piggott Wetland: John Dyer managed to record the presence of a long-tailed bat on this wetland, but not on several of our other F&G wetlands, using a device that makes their ultra-sonic sound able to be heard by humans. The same bat-detector then started picking up noises from the many natural cavities in the buttress root systems of mature kahikatea trees on the Piggott Wetland. This noise was recorded and, when compared, was not unlike that emitted by our native bats, which are known to use such cavities where the males try to attract females by singing. However, further investigation proved it was common crickets that were hiding inside these trees and making all the ultra-sonic noise therein. There is a bat colony on private land not far off in nearby Aka Aka and it is certainly something to keep in mind when managing our wetlands, that bats may be present in older trees, especially cabbage trees, willows, poplars and kahikateas with cavities. When we're doing planting there, some of the species we use to encourage gamebirds can potentially also encourage native bats too. So by choosing and siting tree species carefully, we can benefit the wide-ranging bats at the same time.

It is also the case in the Piggott Wetland that the Waikato River bank has been eroding away for some years, particularly where there is no tree cover. Swamp cypress has proven to be especially good in the role of lake edge and river bank protection, hanging on like iron despite wave-lap, strong currents and exposure to high winds. So the plan is to plant up these eroding areas this spring with swamp cypress to protect the naturally present river berm from being scoured away.

Mr Ross Roberts has been a pest controller all his life and has been contracted by Watercare at Parker Lane, to clean out our Piggott Wetland boundary stream and its true left bank of noxious weeds such as pampas. This will begin as soon as the game season there concludes after Queen's Birthday weekend. John took advantage of this wealth of expertise, when showing Ross around, to get confirmation of the thistle species present and the best means of controlling it. It turns out it is Californian thistle (a.k.a. creeping thistle – *Cirsium arvense*). It is so named because it arrived in NZ in grass seed from California around 1850. Mr Roberts also had some good advice on killing woolly nightshade, by drilling the trunk at regular intervals with a power-drill (drilling downhill), and then injecting 1.5ml of Brushkiller in each hole. The Grassmate spray we have on hand has the same general formulation as Brushkiller

and the woolly nightshade that we have poisoned since does not look at all happy about it. The advantage of using direct injection, according to Ross, is that it disturbs the area less, and so minimises regrowth from seedlings.

Dean Wetland: Staff have followed up registration plates and investigated allegations that some 15 breasted ducks were chucked onto the side of an access canal by hunters in this area. All parties have been spoken to and, while we have our suspicions, there was insufficient evidence to proceed.

McKenzie Wetland: Hunters will have seen the new housing development Kowhai Downs/Waterfall Park east of Pokeno. A total of 117 lots are being built on, with more land zoned for housing on the properties adjoining. This is all bad news for the Fish & Game land to the south, the Cathcart, McKenzie, Blythen, Emmett and Dean Wetlands. When challenged as to why F&G weren't consulted by Waikato District Council, planning staff there denied they had any obligation to do so. So the opportunity to get, for instance, a reverse-sensitivity clause built in would seem to have been lost. Part of the problem is that this area was zoned for a village more than a century ago, and the title has always been a mass of small lots. However one of the neighbours also later entered into an agreement with the district council, that he would develop 4 wetlands in exchange for being allowed to subdivide his land by the road as well. Fish & Game even helped him at no cost with his wetland plans. However no wetland work of any kind has happened since and there has been no enforcement since that we are aware of.

Project 1231 Non Council Land

Waikare Wetland: David helped with the design and implementation of ephemeral wetlands on Waikato Regional Council Scheme land on the northern foreshore of Lake Waikare.

Consent Requirements: Two recent projects that we have been involved in that required resource consents have now had their consent fees remitted in full, and have had all annual charges waived. This is a really positive step and shows that that the Waikato Regional Council acknowledges the environmental benefits we are creating within the region. We are also working closely with a number of catchment management officers and have regularly been able to get further support for landowners for fencing and planting streams and wetlands.

NZTA Wetlands: David has attended further meeting with contractors and NZTA to discuss a number of issues associated with the Ngaruawahia and Huntly Bypasses. One of the issues relates to the storm water monitoring for Lake Areare. There is significant noncompliance with the plan that was produced and a number of monitoring events have been missed. Perhaps more importantly the plan itself is substandard and there is now an agreement that a specialist will be contracted to redesign and implement a new plan. As explained in recent email correspondence, terms have now been agreed with contractors in regards to the mitigation package for the Huntly bypass. The Evans road wetland design is now completed and we await confirmation regarding the redesign and compensation for Fisher Road

WCEET Wetlands: With all the recent rains the wetlands are really starting to fill quickly with a number at capacity already and holding good amounts of waterfowl. Unfortunately, some of these will be affected by large flood events that will inundate the entire floodplain. In these instances we have designed the wetlands to be easily drained. Preliminary investigations have been conducted with WRC technical staff to design a trapping method whereby carp can be extracted and put through their digester unit at Lake Waikare.



Photo 1: A recently completed wetland.

Dumped Vehicles: Hunters at some boat ramps in our region will have noticed dumped cars. Staff have liaised with local Councils to have these removed, but it has been a slow process with repeated complaints by police, DoC, hunters and ourselves in the Waikato district. Still it took some 2 months to get the vehicle removed from the Hump-Back Bridge ramp. Auckland Council, in contrast, only took a few days to remove cars and other rubbish dumped near Makarau River ramp.

Wairoa River: Staff have been involved with Clevedon Waterways to ensure that adjacent gamebird hunters in the Wairoa River are not unduly disadvantaged by this proposed canal development and if, in individual cases, that they are, then they get help with relocation. Ironically there was a Closed Game Area (CGA), on the same river in almost the same North Road location. This had the effect of making tame ducks flock to it and they used the moored boats there as their roosts. All the duck-poo meant that boaties had to go there every weekend to waterblast their decks and efforts to discourage the ducks by using netting-screening and even plastic falcon decoys, didn't really work. These folk insisted we remove the CGA so that duck numbers could again be brought under control. So the message is there for the Waterway Canal folk, if they discourage hunters in the short term. So far all the news from them has been positive. Any hunters in this immediate area are advised to notify Fish & Game of their details so that we can better represent them.

OUTPUT 3 PARTICIPATION

Project 1311 Access Negotiation

Waipa Catchment: Adam has been negotiating and advising on the Waipa catchment plan that will prioritise WRA money in the future. As part of that plan Adam has been pushing for access to be considered a priority, including purchasing access on the Mangatutu and the Upper Waipa.

Maimai Disputes. We have again had a number of these to deal with, with one in particular threatening to turn nasty on opening morning with the new claimant being threatened with physical harm if he tried to hunt from the location. In almost all cases the issues stem from

hunters simply not tagging their maimai by mark up day. In one case we had a hunter swear that he had legitimately tagged his maimai well beforehand although we struggle to see how this is possible given he didn't purchase his licence until 5 days after mark up. The situation is not being helped by the use of paper claim tags. Some of these now have an expiry date, we do not believe that this is enforceable under the Act or the First Schedule and this issue needs to be looked at when we assess next year's regulations. Another issue rangers experienced on opening weekend was the number of hunters that only had paper licence receipts and no photo I.D. despite it being clearly stated that they must carry both.

Project 1331 Magazine/Supplement

Adam has begun stories for the magazine supplement

Project 1341 Other Publications

Adam has been contributing to Reel Life.

OUTPUT 4 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Project 1431 Liaison Advocacy

Lake Pupuke: Adam and family set up a kids fishing stand for the Lake Pupuke fish release with sponsorship from Berkley NZ. Unfortunately turnout was low because the local paper did not print the time of the release, only the location.

Waipa ICM Meeting: Adam gave a talk to Waikato Regional Council staff, Healthy Rivers representatives and DoC staff at the Waipa ICM meeting in Otorohanga.

Project 1441 Displays Promotions

Ducks Nights: Staff attended and gave talks at the usual round of preseason duck nights. David spoke at the Hamilton and Manawatu Duck nights, focusing on the mallard telemetry project. The Manawatu duck night in particular had a high turn out with over 400 hunters in attendance. John Dyer represented Fish & Game at the Westgate Hunting & Fishing duck night and also the Warkworth Hunting & Fishing duck night. There was a very large turnout once more at the latter with many hunters spilling out from the shop into the street. Apart from addressing hunters directly about F&G matters and taking questions from the floor, John was also a co-judge in the duck calling contest there. Both John and I spoke at the Franklin Acclimatisation Society pre-season meeting.

OUTPUT 5 LAW ENFORCEMENT

Project 1511 Ranging

Northern Ranging Opening Weekend: John Dyer was ranging from Waimauku to Wellsford and plenty of places in between including dipping into Northland region. Most hunters seemed to be fairly happy, despite the sun-screen weather and the late tide. When the water did arrive it was a king tide and this created issues with floating weeds and decoys. But it might have also meant people could spend a little longer up side creeks. John and Mr Alec Corban ranged together on the Kaipara Harbour and all hunters met were compliant. Mr Corban is a great asset for Fish & Game in this area.

All hunters met were generally behaving north of the Harbour Bridge, bar one who tried to argue that his father “part leased” the maize field and that is why he didn’t need a gamebird licence. However, when this alibi was followed up, the actual owner had been previously rung by this individual and they also pointed out to the ranger who had the actual lease – not the father, but someone else entirely. What is more, that person had also been rung up by the hunter before he entered their leased field. So this charge is not going away for that hunter any time soon.

In another instance, a farm worker was locking a gate which our ranger had just arrived at. “What’s with all the security?” Our ranger was told the landowner had been carefully feeding his pond, (about 1km in from the nearest road), but someone else had driven in and shot it up before he could. “Oh”, said the worker, “should I have said that?” When the ranger and his helper checked it out, the happy ducks present had presumably eaten any evidence of grain. Nor were there any feeders, though the poachers had left six lead-shot cases lay around the pond edge.

Southern Ranging Opening Weekend: Adam and David checked approximately 70 hunters over opening weekend on the Hauraki Plains. Compliance on the Saturday was abysmal with just under a third of the 30 hunters checked having committed one or more offences. The offences were; four with lead shot, three with no licence (although two of those are claiming landowner rights which have yet to be verified), and five unplugged guns. Pleasingly we had done reconnaissance on a number of ponds on public land prior to the season and none were feeding out, so it appears that this message at least is sinking in.

We got plenty of positive feedback, and those that were caught were generally happy to admit to their mistakes. Only one hunter refused to hand over his gun. The ‘maimai’ he was in resembled a queen street townhouse and was checked at 5pm on Saturday evening. The hunter eventually handed over his gun after being convinced by the landowners that it would be in his best interest. Approximately 18 other hunters were at the location for the after match function and a lot of alcohol was being consumed. Some of them became quite belligerent and it was definitively a situation we were happy to leave in a relative hurry. Some excellent bags were shot, with some hunters checked on Saturday morning achieving maimai limits of 40 ducks by 10am. One pond with 16 hunters packed up with their 160 birds secured by early evening on Saturday.

On the Sunday we detected two more unplugged gun offences for 38 contacts so the majority of hunters were compliant and had a great weekend. Some admitted to us that they had heard from friends that rangers were in the area, so perhaps the higher compliance rate should come as no surprise. In total 8 guns were seized for the weekend. It was great to see a number of family’s out enjoying the nice weather, including one maimai with 3 generations of hunters, where the mums had come down with a large pork roast for mother’s day lunch.

Adam checked two licences on the Whanganui and Whakapapa during the angler use battery change trips.

OUTPUT 8: PLANNING REPORTING

Project 1841 National Liaison

Firearms: Submission made to Arms Inquiry by Select Committee on Law & Order, investigating how criminals obtain firearms.

Animal Welfare Regulations: Submission made on Animal Welfare Regulations discussion paper. This impacts on owners of hunting dog breeds that traditionally have docked tails to counter potential injury as adult working dogs. It also impacts on the removal of dew-claws and even pinioning ducks. We're told that, when Canada geese were pinioned by a vet, nearly all of them bled to death overnight. Those that were pinioned by 'amateurs' suffered no such problems. The premise of this review is to either ban some procedures or insist that only a vet can do others. In Scotland, sporting dog owners are actually transporting their bitches to England so the puppies can be born where they can still be legally tail-docked to prevent life-long repeated injuries which ultimately become not just painful and expensive but also gangrenous. New Zealanders may soon no longer have such options.

Grass Carp Farm: Adam has been involved in ongoing grass carp discussion resulting from the failed attempt to start a grass carp farm in Taupo.

B. Wilson
Chief Executive.