

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF

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

Matters Arising from the Council Meeting of 12 October 2019

- Dr Daniel was asked for an update on the sterile trout project. Dr Daniel replied that the mortality and growth rate of the young fish was similar to that seen with diploid juveniles. The young fish had not yet been tested for their triploid status.
- Council agreed that Mr Peter Nola be awarded a Fish & Game Merit Certificate in recognition of his outstanding service to the Council, wildlife and conservation.
- Mr Klee was asked to provide Council with a report on whether the current Canada Geese policy was still viable given the potential management demands resulting from their increased numbers.
- A report prepared by Chris Owen, Chairperson of the Licence Sub-Committee, was tabled. The report provided three options for the management of licence sales and asked for Council's recommendation. Councillors agreed that Eyede had provided a stable licencing system for many years, and the reduction in price was welcomed. The change to a new system was considered to be too risky given the potential benefits.
- Councillors considered the proposed schedule of meeting dates for 2020 and agreed that the recommendations by the NZF&GC would require a meeting in early March, which was not ideal as it would be only 4 weeks after the February meeting and would not allow adequate time for the preparation of the draft Operational Work Plan and budget. Councillors agreed to ask the NZF&G Council to move their April meeting to the 30th and the final date for draft budgets to the 30th March.

ARMS LEGISLATION BILL

The draft F&G submission was considered by Councillors, who made the following recommendations:

1. Firearms Registration:

Council opposed registration as it was considered to be unnecessary, unworkable, and expensive.

2. Access by Government agencies to registry database:

Council considered that if a registry was established then it should only be accessible by the NZ Police. Councillors expressed considerable concern over the potential security risks.

3. Enshrining in law that owning a firearm is a privilege.

Council considered that this proposal should be opposed as it allowed for the potential of personal bias by an examiner in the issuing of firearm licences.

For all other clauses, Council supported the draft NZF&GC position.

Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report

Hunter Surveys: The hit and miss start to the season continued throughout. We had the lowest average number of hours hunted with a correspondingly low average and total harvest. Many hunting areas stayed dry through to the end of June and it appears that many licence holders simply didn't go out much due to the limited opportunities available at their traditional locations. The number of ducks shot per hunter per hour dropped from the preceding two seasons and was about average for the past decade. Preliminary results indicate a drop in our Grallard population.

Shoveler Survey: Every August, a one-day census of shoveler duck is carried out throughout the country. In our region, Lake Waikare had the largest number of shoveler with 1,850 counted.

Game Research: Mallard duckling survival in response to brood habitat selection and use in Southland and Waikato: This report is now complete and is available as a download in the Auckland/Waikato section of the F&G website.

GBHT Applications and report: David Klee was successful with both funding applications for projects being conducted with private landowners. Another co-funding application was lodged to the Inghams mitigation fund to help supplement one of these projects that falls in the Waitoa catchment. A report was also produced for the trust showcasing 2 wetlands which had been built 5 years ago. Since 2014, David has managed 32 wetland projects that have received a total \$438,913 in external grant funding with a total project value of \$927,522.

Freshwater Action Package: The Freshwater Action Package was released at the beginning of September by the Labour Government. The package includes a new draft National Policy Statement for Freshwater, draft stock exclusion regulations and Farming National Standards. This is a huge package and has potentially huge implications for freshwater management in New Zealand. There is also a tight consultation timeframe. Anna Sintenie is working through the package and preparing notes and a submission which will focus around the implications of the proposal for wetlands and our work in wetlands.

National Biodiversity Statement: NZ has obligations under international conventions to protect its biodiversity. One element of this is the National Biodiversity Strategy, an overarching policy document which is reviewed every decade, and which progress is measured against. Anna prepared a submission on the discussion document, which highlight the good work Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game already does so that this is supported into the future. The submission focussed on the wetlands works, protection and advocacy work we are engaged in.

Healthy Rivers Plan Change 1 update: We attended our third and final appearance at the Hearing for the Plan Change. Helen Marr and Sarah Ongley were presenting, and David Klee was in attendance and able to answer questions put by the commissioners relating to wetlands including the Whangamarino. We felt our contribution was received well.

Fish newsletter: The fish newsletter is currently in preparation and will be sent out to licence holders by the end of this month.

Lake Ototoa: Adam gave a presentation at an Auckland City Council meeting on the potential to remove perch from Lake Ototoa. Adam recommended that fish removal is concentrated on Lake Tomarata due to the size and species present.

Ranging: NZ police issued offence notices to two individuals at the Blue Springs walkway that were allegedly fishing without a licence and in possession of drugs. We will be undertaking a prosecution of these individuals.