

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 160th MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND
GAME COUNCIL HELD AT THE SUN COURT HOTEL AND
CONFERENCE CENTRE AT 14 NORTHCROFT STREET, TAUPO
ON THURSDAY 20th OCTOBER 2016 AT 12.00PM**

PRESENT

Murray Ferris, Lindsay Lyons, Barry Roderick, David Woolner, Sandy Bull, Ken Coombes, Annaka Davis, Laurance Tamati, Neal Hawes, Steve Scragg, and Alan Baird.

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson, Matt Osborne, and Matthew McDougall (Eastern Fish & Game); Graham Whyman (TFAC); Paul Register, Brent Cannard, John Bennett, Brett Wilson Bob Neckelson, Tim Birdsall, Colin Paton, and Ray Dunlop (Wild Fowlers Assn).

1.0 WELCOME

Cr Murray Ferris opened the meeting at 12.15pm and welcomed Councillors, staff and members of the public.

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 Apologies were received from Cr Peter Storey, Ken Raureti (Bay of Plenty Conservation Board), and Ray Bushell.

2.2 *Agreed (Alan Baird/David Woolner) that the apologies for the 160th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [16/10/2.2]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (11 AUGUST 2016)

3.1 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Sandy Bull) that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 August 2016 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [16/10/3.1]*

4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY

4.1 There were no resolutions identified for inclusion in Council Policy.

5.0 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Cr Laurence Tamati queried whether points that he had asked be raised in his absence at the 11 August meeting had been put to the meeting as there was no specific mention of these in the minutes. Andy Garrick confirmed that he had presented his comments to the meeting and these had been incorporated into discussions. The first point related to the discussion on governance policies and the evaluation by Council of the performance of individual members and its Chairperson. Laurance suggested clarity was needed around who was responsible for discussing the results of the Chairperson's evaluation with him/her. Council indicated this matter could be addressed at the same time Council formulated the questions it would ask of its members along with other details of the evaluation process. The second matter related to the land occupier licence agenda item with Laurance suggesting the rights of iwi need to be discussed e.g. would Te Arawa be entitled to free licences given the iwi owns most of the lake beds in the Rotorua region?

6.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

- Cr Alan Baird - Predator control in Fish & Game managed wetlands and reserves;

- Cr Alan Baird - Mallard releases;
- Crs Lindsay Lyons, Barry Roderick - Green tag promotion;
- Cr Annaka Davis - Angler participation;
- Andy Garrick – Management services provided to Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council.

7.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

7.1 No conflict of interest items were identified.

8.0 STANDING ORDERS

8.1 Andy informed Council of the New Zealand Council's decision to adopt the existing draft wording for Section 1.13 "Conflict of Interest" and provided some background as to where this wording had been drawn from. He added that a description of what constitutes a Conflict of Interest and Potential Conflict of Interest had been added to the 'glossary' of terms in Section 1.1.2. Andy also advised that the amendments proposed at the August meeting had been incorporated into the final draft in addition to one other amendment relating to the definition of 'working day' and that all of these changes could be seen within the tracked changes documentation included within the agenda item.

8.2 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Laurance Tamati) that Council adopts the Conflict of Interest rules and amended definition of 'working day' recently approved by the NZ Council and approves the Standing Orders subject to these amendments being incorporated. [16/10/8.2]*

9.0 2017 GAME SEASON CONDITIONS

9.1 Andy Garrick advised the purpose of the discussion was to provide an opportunity to clarify any of the information provided and to identify any additional items or issues Council wanted staff to consider.

9.2 Cr David Woolner sought clarification over the two models presented (linear/cyclic) and queried Matt McDougall as to whether it was possible that the cyclic model was in fact a falling cycle. Matt McDougall advised that it was possible, that more modelling work was needed to determine this, and that he hoped to be able to provide more information at the November meeting.

9.3 Cr Lindsay Lyons queried whether further consideration was being given to reducing the bag limits in the Broadlands/Reporoa areas to improve populations there? He referred to the maps and suggestions that had been provided for information for last year's Game Season Conditions discussion. Council discussion followed and points covered included:

- Aerial reviews of habitat and counts of mallard and grey duck undertaken in 2016;
- Duck numbers in this area have historically been low and historic hunter diaries consistently indicate this to be one of the worst areas for duck hunting in the country;
- Sparse habitat south of Mihi bridge, but a number of ponds in the northern area;
- Habitat funding opportunities through Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust and the Waikato River Authority;
- Hunter diaries and staff opinion suggest that most of the hunting occurs on opening;

- Captive reared mallard trials;
 - Collapse of Waikato lakes' 'duck factories' and a reduction in numbers of birds tracking into the area via the Waikato River;
 - Mighty River Power's ramping regime and the effects of this on wetland habitats and breeding.
- 9.4 Brent Cannard spoke of ponds he knew of located within the former Tahurakuri forest areas (now Wairakei Pastoral) which were unable to be accessed for hunting but could potentially be enhanced for duck breeding. Matt McDougall advised that Mighty River Power had set up mitigation funds which could be accessed for this purpose and suggested that Brent contact John Meikle to discuss these opportunities.
- 9.5 Cr Ken Coombes queried the success of the habitat work undertaken on a number of the Waiootapu oxbows. Andy Garrick advised that outcomes had been varied and there had been issues with some of these such as stock getting into plantings. He said that we had not seen the results that we had hoped for.
- 9.6 Cr Steve Scragg referred back to the information supplied with the maps in November 2015 and queried Matt McDougall as to what harvest level would make a difference? Matt McDougall provided an explanation of graphs included within the agenda item which indicated that a severe reduction in bag limits would be required to make a difference. Cr Steve Scragg queried the public present on their thoughts of a reduced bag and the need to retain a reduced bag over a few seasons?
- 9.7 Bob Neckelson commented on the limited number of ponds in the area and particularly the high number of sterile ponds with no cover. He felt that our focus should be placed on habitat and that cutting the bag limit is likely to see a reduction in licence revenue.
- 9.8 Cr Barry Roderick spoke of the research work currently being undertaken by Jen Sheppard indicating that broods were extremely vulnerable and suggested that releasing captive reared birds might be beneficial. Matt McDougall advised that study's overseas had found that released birds did not usually do well and noted that while Fish & Game had recently released birds in Broadlands, it was difficult to evaluate how useful this might be as a means of restoring local populations. However, he said that releases may be a good option to 'reseed' developed ponds that were not producing. Further discussion followed on;
- Size of hens, bigger eggs, bigger offspring;
 - Longer seasons affecting hen condition;
 - Research showing an average of 10.5 eggs per nest and nesting occurring up to four times per year;
 - Ephemeral wetlands and their value for raising ducklings but their demise due to drainage and conversions to dairy.
- Andy Garrick said that we need to be able to adequately measure the outcomes of captive reared mallard releases, and spoke of the Broadlands release this year and the feeding and protection that were provided in an endeavour to maximise survival and ensure the hens are in good condition during the breeding season. He said that it was early days with this release and that there was no real data available yet but it appeared that there was a predominance of males at the release sites presently suggesting hens were away nesting.
- 9.9 Andy Garrick advised there appeared to be releases of captive reared mallards occurring within the region that Fish & Game has not been informed of as the permits to do so are issued by the Department of Conservation. He said that we are trying to

- rectify this issue as it is important that Fish & Game, as the statutory manager of game birds, is aware of all releases of captive reared birds.
- 9.10 Council discussed the proposal put forward by the NZ Falconers Association to enable registered falconers the ability to take other game bird species. Questions were raised as to how selective raptors were in terms of the prey they take. Matt McDougall advised that there were only 5-6 registered falconers who usually hunted just a couple of days a season.
- 9.11 ***Agreed (Steve Scragg/Lindsay Lyons) that Council supports the proposal to allow registered falconers, who hold a game bird licence and an Authority to Handle birds from the Department of Conservation, to hunt other game bird species as listed within the Game Bird hunting regulations. [16/10/9.11]*** Cr Alan Baird opposed the motion.
- 9.12 Andy Garrick provided some background to the Waewaetutuki wetland and its use for novice hunting over the past two game bird seasons. He said that the current novice hunter programme, while popular, was not cost effective in terms of staff time as currently implemented and felt that we could move our focus to events that would benefit a larger number of both newbies and existing but relatively inexperienced hunters. He said that the programme in Waewaetutuki was a great way of introducing novices to the sport and felt it was worth continuing but with a greater involvement of volunteers as opposed to staff. Cr Barry Roderick agreed that it was a project worth continuing and advised that he knew of a number of retired hunters who would be more than happy to assist and put something back into the sport.
- 9.13 ***Agreed (Barry Roderick/Alan Baird) that Council supports the continuation of the novice hunter programme at the Waewaetutuki wetland but with greater input from volunteers to enable staff to be released for other projects. [16/10/9.13]***
- 9.14 Council discussed the proposal by Equine to extend its upland game property boundaries to include the neighbouring property (C A Cropp Farms Ltd).
- 9.15 ***Agreed (Alan Baird/Lindsay Lyons) that Council supports the proposal to incorporate the Cropp Farms' property as detailed in Equine's application into the boundaries of the Equine upland game property. [16/10/9.15]*** Crs Sandy Bull, Steve Scragg and Ken Coombes opposed the motion, and Cr Annaka Davis abstained from voting.
- 9.16 Cr Barry Roderick wished to confirm that the plugging of guns allowing for no more than 3 shots was to be enforceable next season. Andy Garrick confirmed that this was a voluntary requirement in 2016 but would be mandatory for 2017.
- 9.17 Brent Cannard requested further information in relation to proposals to require the use of non toxic shot in sub gauges. Cr Steve Scragg advised that the original intention had been to ban the use of lead shot in all gauges but as no one was importing non toxic ammunition for sub gauges at the time it was not applied to sub gauges. Now that it is available for 16 and 20 gauges and is likely to be available for all gauges in future the topic is back on the table. Andy Garrick advised that the NZ Council in 2014 had committed to reviewing the exemption for sub gauges in 2017, but the Minister of Conservation had more recently asked Fish & Game to bring a recommendation forward in relation to this. At its last meeting in August the Eastern Council resolved to recommend to the NZ Council that up to date information needed to be compiled and evaluated before a decision was made and that this should be conveyed to the Minister of Conservation.

10.0 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

10.1 Andy Garrick provided some background to this request from the NZ Council for individual Councils to identify five priorities which they believe should be considered for development as Standard Operating Procedures in 2016-17. Andy felt that a better use of Council's time would be to focus on priorities for, and development of national policies rather than operational SOPs which are more of a matter for staff's consideration. Andy provided Council with some examples of national policies needing to be developed e.g. release of captive reared mallards, grass/silver carp, 1080, branding etc. Council agreed with this approach and that it is a management role to develop operational procedures. Further items were suggested such as;

- Risk management;
- External communications/social media;
- Accounting & reporting;
- Standardisation of remuneration packages for managers.

Cr Lindsay Lyons suggested that the preliminary list compiled provided by Andy as well as these additions be presented to the NZ Council for consideration, and it be left up to the New Zealand Council to prioritise. Cr Murray Ferris asked those present to submit any further feedback they might have to Andy within the next week.

10.2 Andy Garrick also highlighted the need for the NZ Council to review its draft National Policy document, which appears to have been in draft form since 2009, suggesting this might be an appropriate starting point for the development of national policy.

11.0 INFORMATION FOR THE 2015-2016 DRAFT PERFORMANCE REPORT

11.1 Kate Thompson informed council that the Draft Performance Report and Financial Statements were currently with the auditor and that the auditors had been at the office this week undertaking the required onsite checks. She advised that there is one financial adjustment yet to be made relating to work which was to be funded by the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Fund. Cr Murray Ferris advised that he had received an audit arrangement letter from the auditors advising that their contract was due to expire this year. He felt that the auditors, Owen McLeod & Co. of Hamilton, and their staff were very easy to deal with, and he supported continuation of our arrangements with them. Likewise Cr Barry Roderick added that they were very professional in their approach and supported continuation of their services.

11.2 Cr Laurance Tamati queried the process from here, particularly timing, and the need to present the final report at the Annual Public meeting on December 1. Andy Garrick confirmed that the completed report including audit report and management letter would be circulated to Council before the next meeting of Council. The Council would then need to adopt the report at the December meeting of Council which is followed closely by the Annual Public meeting where the report is presented. He said that the report was all but complete and expected that any amendments would be addressed and notified between now and the next meeting of Council.

11.3 Cr Murray Ferris advised that the Chairman's report was to be available within the next week and that this would be circulated to Council via email.

11.4 *Agreed (Steve Scragg/Ken Coombes) that Council receives the draft report comprising the Statement of Service Performance and draft Financial Statements for the 2015-2016 year. [16/10/11.4]*

12.0 WAIKAREMOANA SPORTS FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT FUND

- 12.1 Andy Garrick clarified some minor adjustments to figures reported as these were not available at the time of writing. The adjustments related to the 2015-16 Wairoa Access Programme (\$3,189 amended to \$2,920), and the 2015-16 Survey and Monitoring of Spawning Tributaries (\$13,251 amended to \$13,521).
- 12.2 *Agreed (Steve Scragg/David Woolner) that Council receives the update and information on the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund. [16/10/12.2]*

13.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

- 13.1 Council invited Graham Whyman from the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee to provide a brief report to the meeting. Graham thanked Council for the opportunity to join the meeting and for Andy Garrick's contribution to the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee. He considered that the recent changes to the Taupo fisheries legislation enabling an Anglers Notice review process and amendments to the Taupo regulations was a huge step forward and said that he would be very interested in hearing more about Fish & Game's deliberations in relation to the first and second schedules of its Anglers Notice. Graham commented on Taupo fishery conditions advising that it had not been spectacular of late but the fish being caught were in very good condition and some larger fish were coming through now. He said that Biosecurity Officers had been active in getting the Didymo message out around the area and commented about our need to be aware of other issues which were occurring overseas such as the parasite infestation which had recently lead to the closure of a river in Yellowstone. Brent Cannard expressed concern over the large number of trout congregating and being caught in the Tongariro? on the lake side of the State Highway bridge querying whether the area should be considered a no fishing area to enable these fish to travel further upstream. Graham advised that it was unlikely to affect the population as there are also a lot of fish seen in the upper pools as well and the regulations restricted catch to 3 fish per day. Graham thanked Council for the invitation to attend its meeting.
- 13.2 Annaka Davis provided a report from her position on the Tongariro-Taupo Conservation Board. She advised that a board member, Laurie Burdett, had been endorsed as the Conservation Board appointment to the Central North Island Sika Foundation. A Board meeting had highlighted that DOC should be generating more funding from tourism. Locally, Destination Great Lake Taupo and the Taupo Fishery were looking at ways they can jointly market the fisheries and it had been suggested the possibility of working with Fish & Game and marketing fishing in both regions should be explored. Annaka highlighted Might River Power's application for an exemption to provide a marginal strip at Whakamaru Power Station which the Minister agreed to without the opportunity for public notification and therefore consultation. The Tongariro-Taupo Board and the Waikato Conservation Board had provided comment to the Minister when making her decision and had recommended a marginal strip be created and the application be publicly notified. Andy Garrick advised that Fish & Game had been involved in the process and advised that he would provide additional detail at Council's next meeting.
- 13.3 Lindsay Lyons spoke of the recent one day meeting of the NZ Council in Wellington and in particular Sir Geoffrey Palmer's input into discussions surrounding the Inland Revenue Departments proposal to tax Fish & Game. He confirmed that Sir Geoffrey Palmer and Bryce Johnson had met with the IRD and that this proposal is to be

reappraised. Lindsay also informed Council of the ongoing NZ Council office review and the need to appoint a new member to the team to assist Robert Sowman. Lindsay confirmed that the President of the NZ Freshwater Federation of Guides, Bryan Colman, was present at the last meeting and that the proposal for a guides licence had been agreed on and they were now ready to meet with the Minister regarding this. Lindsay also commented on recent findings relating to the effects of dissolved phosphorus on Didymo and suggestions to trial this in the headwaters of affected rivers. He said that the levels of phosphorus in the North Island were typically higher than in the South, especially around the volcanic plateau, and suggested that this may be why Didymo has not been detected in the North Island. The next meeting of the NZ Council was to be a three day meeting in Whangarei.

- 13.4 Lindsay also commented on the 1080 drops in the Kahurangi National Park two days ahead of opening of the trout fishing season. Andy Garrick provided some background to Fish & Game concerns over eating fish that have ingested 1080 pellets. He said that Fish & Game had taken its concerns to DOC and the National Poison Centre and that MPI had come back saying that there was a potential but extremely low risk to human health. Annaka Davis suggested Fish & Game needs to discuss its concerns with the Medical Officer of Health of the local Public Health Unit who can impose conditions on aerial applications of 1080.
- 13.5 Lindsay advised that Bryce Johnson is looking to retire by the end of 2017 and that the NZ Council was in the process of reviewing the CEO's job description. It was likely that a new CEO would be appointed by July next year to enable a smooth transition.

14.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

- 14.1 Andy Garrick advised that Council had now received Volume One of the Health and Safety Plan and that Carmel Veitch had played a big role in compiling this. Andy advised that this was a live document and subject to ongoing improvement and amendment. Cr Barry Roderick asked whether Council could view the accident register at its meetings. Andy Garrick advised that he would be comfortable with impromptu audit and queried the need to view the register on a regular basis? Barry advised that he was particularly concerned over any serious harm incidents and a need to require drug and alcohol testing. Cr Alan Baird advised that this type of testing needed to be agreed to within employees' employment contracts. Andy Garrick agreed, and advised that staff's employment contracts were currently being reviewed and this was on the items to be incorporated. Cr Lindsay Lyons acknowledged Carmel Veitch's work on this National Health & Safety Plan.
- 14.2 Kate Thompson provided a brief report on licence sales year to date, advising that it was too early to make any assumptions and although the reports within the agenda indicated that sales were up on last season, more recent results to 18 October show that they are down. She noted that this may be influenced by the intensive marketing of the new categories last season which is likely to have prompted people to purchase their licences earlier. Matt McDougall questioned whether there is to be a follow up on the outcomes from the introduction of the new licence categories? He, in particular, had noticed a significant number of day licences out on the lake during this year's opening day. Kate advised that she will be working with the Licence Working Party to identify switching patterns from the season prior to the new categories being introduced and that this should show if there has been a greater shift to the short term categories.

- 14.3 *Agreed (Steve Scragg/David Woolner) that Council receives the Health and Safety Report. [16/10/14.3]*
- 14.4 *Agreed (Steve Scragg/David Woolner) that Council receives the Management, Finance, and Licence Sales reports and approves the payments for July and August 2016 totalling \$291,329.31. [16/10/14.4]*

15.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

- 15.1 Cr Alan Baird queried the level of predator control occurring within Fish & Game's wetland reserves? Matt McDougall advised that generally there is not a lot of predator control in the reserves though Ray Bushell had undertaken some in the Kaituna WMR for a period and that locals had been looking after Awaiti WMR for some time too though he understood this was no longer the case. Matt advised that Fish & Game undertakes some limited and localised predator control in conjunction with the banding programme but to go beyond this there was a need to involve volunteers and locals. Alan felt that if Fish & Game was seen to be proactive in predator control that this may encourage hunters to do the same. Matt McDougall advised full scale predator control was costly and suggested that if we are going to do it we need to do a good job of it. He noted that the estimated costs of controlling predators in some USA studies equated to approximately \$70 per duck and aside from this there was a need to be mindful of prey switching i.e. the removal of a predator can often open the door for others e.g. hawks and pukeko. Barry Roderick also commented on a study in the USA that had shown that a 20 year long predator control programme had ultimately worsened the situation as a result of prey switching. He added that Jenn Sheppard's study had shown nest survival in NZ to be 56% whereas in the USA it was as low as 14%. Graham Whyman commented on the successes achieved in the upper Waimarino with predator control and the return of the blue duck. Cr Sandy Bull added that he was involved with a significant control programme in Gisborne where the predators just keep coming in from neighbouring areas as fast as they were removed.
- 15.2 Cr Alan Baird queried if the Broadlands release had worked and whether we were looking to do more? Andy Garrick advised that the 2016 release was an opportunistic one resulting from an offer from NZ Game Birds to donate surplus birds to Fish & Game, and while there was some limited funding available in the 2016-17 work plan to devote to captive reared mallard monitoring, a further release would only be an option if birds were again donated. He advised that while we could measure and understand the survival of the birds released it was difficult to measure their productivity and the contribution they might make to local or regional populations.
- 15.3 Cr Lindsay Lyons briefed council on the recent Green tag promotion and the interest and excitement that it had created over opening. He was keen to undertake this type of promotion next season and suggested that we aim to look at opportunities early next year. Cr Barry Roderick said that he was surprised over the lack of children out on opening and suggested that the next promotion include some spot prizes for children. Kate Thompson provided an overview of the outcome of the promotion including tags caught, prizes, participation, and licence uptake. Cr Barry Roderick suggested that some form of sponsorship might induce some additional excitement into local iwi competitions such as the Tangaroa. Lindsay thanked staff for their work on this promotion and Council thanked Lindsay Lyons and Barry Roderick for their sponsorship of the major prize.
- 15.4 Cr Annaka Davis commented on the packs issued by the Harbourmaster of the Bay of Plenty Regional Council on opening day and queried whether Fish & Game should not

be doing something similar. Andy Garrick advised that this has been done in the past but more recently we have provided giveaways of lures sponsored by Kilwell to kids on opening day and limited the distribution of pamphlets or other information to those who request such. Matt Osborne advised that the packs produced by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council are funded by Biosecurity NZ. Andy noted that giveaway packs are something that we could give further consideration to in future if we see a benefit in doing so.

15.5 Andy Garrick provided an update on the formal and informal arrangements Eastern Region has with the Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council, and acknowledged the flexibility and tolerance this Council has demonstrated in allowing him to be involved to the extent he has been over the past 15 months or so. Andy advised that from his perspective it was timely for him to start withdrawing from the management role he has been playing there, as Hawke's Bay now had some good staff on the ground capable of operating much more independently and able to take on more of the management mantle. Andy advised that he had informed the Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council that it was his intention to reduce his currently budgeted management services of 25 hrs per month to 8 hours per month as of 1 January 2017 if they wished to retain him in a mentoring capacity. The existing field/admin services contract would continue as budgeted. He said that the Hawke's Bay Council appeared to be comfortable with this arrangement and would look to advertise a manager/field officer position with a view to making an appointment prior to the end of the year. Cr Murray Ferris acknowledged Andy and Eastern staff's contribution to the Hawke's Bay Council and Lindsay Lyons commended Andy on his work with them. Andy expected that the Eastern and Hawke's Bay regions would be working far more collaboratively into the future which would be a good thing for both regions. Andy will provide an update to Council at its next meeting.

15.6 Cr Murray Ferris thanked Council and visitors for their contribution to today's meeting in Taupo.

16.0 **MEETING CLOSED**

16.1 The meeting was closed at 3.22 pm.


.....
Lindsay Lyons
Acting Chairman

Date

1 - 12 - 2016
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SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

2.0 APOLOGIES

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