

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 173rd MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW
ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 6th DECEMBER 2018 AT 12.00PM**

Present

Crs Murray Ferris, Barry Roderick, David Woolner, Neal Hawes, Laurance Tamati, Sandy Bull, Adam Rayner, Alan Baird, and Annaka Davis (arrived 12.15pm).

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson, Matt McDougall, Carmel Veitch, Anthony van Dorp, Lynne Sands, Mark Sherburn, John Meikle, Eben Herbert, and Lloyd Gledhill (Eastern Fish & Game); Ken Raureti (Bay of Plenty Conservation Board) arrived 1.10pm.

1.0 WELCOME

1.1 Cr Murray Ferris (Chairman) opened the meeting at 12.00pm and welcomed Councillors and staff.

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 Apologies were received from Crs Steve Scragg, Peter Storey, Lindsay Lyons, Ken Coombes, Ngahi Bidois, and Geoff Thomas; Helen Neale (Department of Conservation); and Ray Bushell. Cr Annaka Davis had advised earlier that she might be delayed.

2.2 *Agreed (Alan Baird/Adam Rayner) that the apologies for the 173rd meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [18/12/2.2]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (1 NOVEMBER 2018)

3.1 *Agreed (David Woolner/Adam Rayner) that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2018 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [18/12/3.1]*

4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY

4.1 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Adam Rayner) that Item 10.15 relating to a change to the "Intermediate" regulations for black swan be incorporated into Council Policy. [18/12/4.1]*

5.0 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2018.

6.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

- Alan Baird – Upland Game Properties

7.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

7.1 Andy Garrick explained the conflict of interest process and provided those Councillors present with a "Declaration of Interest" form for completion and return. Andy advised that these completed forms would be held in the front of the register for future reference, as had been suggested by Cr Ngahi Bidois at Council's November meeting.

8.0 2017-2018 PERFORMANCE REPORT

8.1 The audited copy of the 2017-2018 Performance Report for the Eastern Fish & Game Region was tabled at the meeting. Andy Garrick explained that there had only been some very minor changes made to wording since the draft report had been provided to Council.

8.2 Andy provided an overview of the outcomes of the audit, and noted that while the Auditor had not identified any issues with the Performance Report or our financial management and controls, two additional undertakings were suggested in relation to our processes. The first of these was that there should be independent checking and sign off of datasets and data collection processes and reports which were undertaken and provided to Council as per the Statement of Service Performance. Questions raised during the audit in support of this recommendation were how, otherwise, could Council be assured that the numbers and size of trout reported from drift dive counts or Te Wairoa trap monitoring, or the number of ova and fish produced by the hatchery be a true and correct record and not subject to processing errors or fabrication? Council discussed this, and agreed that operational activities and information/reports submitted to Council had sufficient oversight from peers and/or the Regional Manager (who not only edited all reports presented to Council, but retained a close connection to, and oversight of staff and projects) to make material departures from reality a very low risk/unlikely event. Furthermore, independent checks of the veracity of data collected would in most cases be impractical if indeed feasible, and an unjustifiable use of our limited resources.

The second item related to independent review and approval of manual journal entries. Carmel Veitch highlighted that changes to items within our Xero accounting software were able to be undertaken by editing the original transaction rather than by way of a journal entry meaning independent sign off of the manual journals would not capture all amendments made. She said the use of manual journals during the year was minimal, and they were primarily used for end of financial year accruals. Council noted that the processes the region currently uses to review and report transactions was robust with several staff members involved at each step along the way, i.e. processing, checking, manager sign off, and reporting of expenditure.

8.3 *Agreed (David Woolner/Alan Baird) that Council receives the Audit Management letter for the year ended 31 August 2018 and requests that the Chairman provide a written response to the Auditor regarding the items raised. [18/12/8.3]*

8.4 *Agreed (Neal Hawes/Sandy Bull) that Council adopts the Performance Report for the 2017-2018 year. [18/12/8.4]*

9.0 PRESENTATION: "A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A GAME BIRD MANAGER"

9.1 Power Point presentation by Senior Fish & Game Officer, Matt McDougall.

10.0 Cr Murray Ferris welcomed Ken Raureti from the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board to the meeting.

11.0 2019 GAME SEASON CONDITIONS

11.1 Andy Garrick noted that a number of the conditions proposed for the 2019 Game Season had been agreed at Council's last meeting in November and therefore, did not

- need to be revisited. Andy suggested Council focus their discussion from Item 4 onwards.
- 11.2 *Shooting from a Moving Boat* – Andy advised that this item had been raised at Council’s November meeting, the outcome of which was a request for staff to review Auckland/Waikato Region’s Second Schedule regulation aimed at curbing the practice, and whether there was merit in the Eastern Region adopting it. Council supported an amended version of the regulation recommended by staff and agreed to its inclusion in Eastern Region’s proposed Second Schedule.
- 11.3 ***Agreed (Barry Roderick/Alan Baird) that Council supports the inclusion of an additional regulation to its Second Schedule which would enable more effective compliance action to be taken in relation to the hunting and killing of game from a moving boat. Accepted wording - “No person may possess a firearm that can be rapidly deployed in or on any unmoored vessel, except (1) where the unmoored vessel is not being propelled at the time by a motorised device, or (2) the firearm is needed to retrieve wounded game. For the purposes of this rule a firearm is considered unable to be rapidly deployed if it has been dismantled or secured in a case, gunslip or other secure compartment”. [18/12/11.3]***
- 11.4 *Pukeko limit* – Since this item was raised at the November meeting staff had reviewed the proposal to lift the daily bag limit on pukeko and provided some additional background information in support of retaining the status quo until results from the special pukeko season to be held in February 2020 were evident. Cr Sandy Bull, who had suggested a higher limit, particularly in Area B1, at the earlier meeting advised he was comfortable retaining the status quo as it was now clear that the average hunter daily harvest of pukeko was low despite a 10-bird limit being available.
- 11.5 ***Agreed (Murray Ferris/Alan Baird) that Council supports retaining the status quo for the pukeko daily bag limit until outcomes from the special pukeko season in February 2020 have been determined. [18/12/11.5]***
- 11.6 *Special Swan Season* - Council reviewed the information provided by Matt McDougall and the proposed recommendation to continue the special swan season in Area A1 for the 2019-20 Season.
- 11.7 ***Agreed (Alan Baird/Adam Rayner) that Council supports the proposed special swan season for the weekend of 29 February/1 March 2020 in Management Area A1. [18/12/11.7]***
- 11.8 *Split bag limits* – Council considered the proposal to increase bag limits for mallard and grey duck over opening weekend only. Eben Herbert commented from his experience, that most hunters rarely took their limit on opening weekend and reducing limits following the opening might be a disincentive for further hunting during the remainder of the season. Cr Adam Raynor commented that for hunters such as himself, the bag limit did not make any difference to him as opening weekend was more about the duck hunting experience than taking home the limit. Cr Alan Baird had a different view in that some hunters do go out to take their limit and it’s those hunters that could potentially have a significant impact on the population should limits over opening weekend be increased.
- 11.9 ***Agreed (Adam Rayner/Alan Baird) that the existing set of season regulations tied to the threshold management approach remains the status quo. [18/12/11.9]***
- 11.10 Council briefly discussed the following;
- *Shooting greenheads* – instead of setting sex-based bag limits which are impractical due to the difficulty in identifying males from females in flight, a

better option is to continue encouraging hunter to take males rather than females where they are able to do so.

- *Robo ducks* – Matt McDougall advised that David Klee from Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game had undertaken some work on the effects of robo ducks on overall harvest of mallards and studies had also been undertaken overseas. Studies indicate harvest rates vary in space and time, and between species. Overseas studies show that harvest rates of mallards are generally higher using robo or spinning wing ducks than not using them, and observations here suggest their effectiveness is likely to be greater earlier in the season rather than later on. It's appropriate to note that we have daily bag limits and season lengths available to limit overall harvest if we need to do so, and it could be argued that this is a more appropriate way of reducing harvest than attempting to do so by prohibiting the use of hunting aids such as robo ducks. Staff could obtain further information if Council wished to pursue this further.
- *Pond feeding* – Cr Barry Roderick questioned whether this was legal given Sir Geoffrey Palmers opinion relating to the legality of pheasant hunting on upland game properties and the fact that this practice has been facilitated by Fish & Game and unintentionally or unknowingly condoned by the Minister despite it being unlawful. Could the same be true of pond feeding which is allowed in 11 Fish & Game regions? Eben Herbert advised that section 17 of the Wildlife Act prohibits pond feeding without the consent of the Minister. This being so pond feeding is legal as the Minister approves the game season conditions each year which for some years have provided for pond feeding in all regions except Auckland/Waikato. The Minister does not have this discretion in relation to the sale of hunting rights.

12.0 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS AND COUNCILLOR INDUCTION

- 12.1 Andy Garrick provided a brief overview of the Governance Manual and advised Council that a session on Governance would be included in the February 2019 meeting agenda. Cr David Woolner asked whether all regions utilised the same Governance Policies to which Andy Garrick replied that Eastern Region and Hawke's Bay's documents are based on New Zealand Council's Governance Policy and Standing Orders documents as all other regions probably are, or should be. Eastern Region had made minor amendments to its documents to 'regionalise' these when they were updated in 2016.

13.0 DATES FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS IN 2019

- 13.1 Andy Garrick advised that the proposed schedule for Council's 2019 meeting dates presented in Agenda Item 12 was based on the corresponding Thursdays in the current schedule, and these in turn were timed to accommodate traditional operational deadlines set by the New Zealand Council. However, since the agenda was prepared, the NZ Council had voted to bring forward by three weeks the joint meeting it had with managers last year to finalise licence fee recommendations. Licence fee recommendations are based on a critical review of proposed budgets and contestable fund bids from the 13 Fish & Game Councils. To accommodate the earlier meeting date, regional budgets and contestable funding bids will this year need to be forwarded to the NZ Council Office by 20 March 2019, and will be adopted or rejected by the NZ Council prior to, in the case of Eastern's budget, being reviewed and signed off as is customarily the case by the Eastern Fish and Game Council at its meeting in mid April.

It's not practical nor justifiable bringing Eastern's meeting forward to accommodate the NZC's directive, and this really only leaves one option, which is for staff to develop a draft budget and present this along with tentative contestable fund bids to Eastern's Executive Committee for sign off prior to 20 March rather than it being considered by a full meeting of Council. Cr Alan Baird queried whether details would be reported to the whole Council at its April meeting? Andy confirmed that would occur and suggested that the information provided to the Executive Committee and the outcome of its deliberations could be forwarded to all Councillors at the same time its submitted to the NZ Council Office or just before if possible.

- 13.2** *Agreed (Laurance Tamati/Adam Rayner) that Council supports the proposal to have funding requirements and contestable fund bids signed off by the Council's Executive Committee in order to meet the New Zealand Council's deadline of 20 March 2019, and that a summary of the proposed budget and draft funding bids would be supplied to the full Council at the same time, or prior to if possible, that its submitted to the NZ Council Office. [18/12/13.2]*
- 13.3** *Agreed (Alan Baird/David Woolner) that Council confirms all proposed 2019 meeting dates as proposed with the final meeting date for the year being 5 December 2019. [18/12/13.3]*

14.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

14.1 Tongariro-Taupo Conservation Board

Annaka Davis was unable to attend the most recent meeting of the Board and had nothing new to report.

14.2 Bay of Plenty Conservation Board

Ken Raureti spoke on behalf of the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board on several matters including;

- Intimidation experienced by Department of Conservation staff and Board members by anti-1080 activists, particularly through the use of social media.
- Delay with the Wairua Hut concession. Fish & Game staff had been advised this would be resolved in the near future and highlighted issues resulting from the overuse of the hut toilet by boaties and trampers.
- Catfish are a real concern for the Board, and in particular preventing their spread to other lakes.
- Water quality continues to be high on the Board's agenda.

- 14.3** Ken Raureti also spoke on behalf of Te Komiti Whakahaere (Te Arawa Lakes Fisheries Management Committee). Referring to its management plan for taonga species, Ken provided Council with a heads up that the committee was intending to submit a request to Fish & Game to halt the release of trout into Lake Okataina. Ken advised that there was no wish to stop trout fishing or to remove trout from the lake, rather the aim was to reduce trout numbers in an effort to give koura the opportunity to thrive and re-establish what had once been a bountiful population. Council raised a number of questions about the potential impacts on licence holders, and items discussed included wild spawning, angler use, research and monitoring, harvest, and compliance. Chairman Murray Ferris advised that Council would welcome a full and frank discussion on the topic.

- 14.4** Ken thanked Andy and the team at Eastern Fish & Game for the relationship we have with the Board and DOC staff.

14.5 *New Zealand Fish and Game Council*

Having attended the recent meeting of the NZ Council hosted in this region, and given Cr Lindsay Lyons wasn't able to be present today, Cr Barry Roderick advised that positive comments had been made by NZ Councillors regarding the great facility we have here, and the Eastern Region staff who are involved with national matters, particularly Carmel Veitch who had taken on the finance role for the NZ Council. Barry commented on the tremendous job Cr Geoff Thomas had done in hosting the group at Lake Tarawera, and added that a highlight for him was Ken Raureti's blessing of the meal and speaking about the history of the lake. On the other side of the coin Barry noted that one or two NZ Councillors still held a less than positive view on this region's budget versus revenue and the number of staff we had given that Eastern was no longer leading the country in terms of licence revenue.

14.6 Cr Murray Ferris read aloud a letter of thanks received from the New Zealand Council.

15.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

15.1 Cr Neal Hawes queried how the online angler diary was going and where this is located as he had difficulty in finding it on the website. Mark Sherburn advised that he would check that the link had not been removed, and advised that use of the diary had been low to date and it would be likely to take some time before anglers became regular users of it.

15.2 Cr Barry Roderick asked whether the forest managers for Kaingaroa would consider opening the forest to anglers earlier considering recent significant rainfall? Anthony van Dorp confirmed that this was unlikely as opening of the forest was not only determined by rainfall, but extended weather forecasts and wind were also taken in to consideration. Anthony assured Council that staff liaison with the forest managers about access to the forest was ongoing.

15.3 Cr Barry Roderick queried the need for an arborist to remove an at-risk cabbage tree which had been identified in the Health & Safety report. Mark Sherburn advised that this large tree, located by the hatchery building, needed to be climbed and dismantled in sections which was not something staff had the necessary skills and training to do.

15.4 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/David Woolner) that Council receives the Management and Health and Safety reports. [18/12/15.4]*

15.5 Andy Garrick informed Council that the proposed budget for the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Financial Performance and Statement of Cashflows which had been included within the agenda for approval had omitted funding required for the Lake Tarawera Research project. The proposal was not part of the contestable funding process, rather the funds were to be sourced from the region's Non-Resident Levy Reserve and this had been supported by Council at its April meeting. Kate Thompson distributed replacement documents highlighting the inclusion of the additional \$20,000 within the budgets and cashflow for Council to review.

15.6 *Agreed (Adam Rayner/Laurance Tamati) that Council receives and approves the updated budget figures for the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Financial Performance, and Statement of Cashflows for the 2018-2019 financial year including the proposed Non-Resident Levy Reserve funding of \$20,000 for the Lake Tarawera research project. [18/12/15.6]*

15.7 *Agreed (David Woolner/Barry Roderick) that Council receives the Finance Report and approves payments for September and October 2018 totalling \$314,275.57. [18/12/15.7]*

15.8 Council received the Licence sales report and Kate Thompson provided a brief update advising that sales had fallen on the back of the recent poor weather and it appeared to have had a more significant impact on the South Island regions. Cr Barry Roderick asked what was happening with the Taupo fishery and their licence sales? Andy Garrick advised that he did not have a recent report from the Department of Conservation. Cr Annaka Davis commented that the condition of the fish in the rivers appeared to be down this year and Cr Barry Roderick felt that fish were in better condition last year.

16.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

16.1 Cr Alan Beard queried whether the days are numbered for pheasant preserves in response to the correspondence sent out to Upland Game Property operators in late November. Alan also asked whether the Wildlife Act could be changed to accommodate the sale of pheasant hunting on pheasant preserves? Andy Garrick commented that it would be difficult to amend the Act and changing the Act was a proposition that was very unlikely to gain the support it required to get off the ground. A number of related items were discussed including the economic benefits and additional hunting opportunities provided by Upland Game Properties, impacts on licence revenue, what prompted the legal opinion obtained from Sir Geoffrey Palmer, and why has what has widely been recognised as an illegal activity been allowed to go on for so long? Andy noted that in addition to Upland Game Property operators being provided with an opportunity to provide feedback on the future of Upland Game Properties, the NZ Council would be inviting feedback from Fish & Game regions on the topic. It was currently in the process of preparing a paper that would be incorporated into the agenda for Council's February 2019 meeting.

16.2 Cr David Woolner provided a brief overview of changes he proposed for the Council and Manager annual assessment forms. David advised that he would provide a draft to the Executive Committee after which they would be tabled for Council's comment. In the meantime, David requested that questions or comments be emailed to him.

17.0 FAREWELL TO DEPARTING COUNCILLORS

17.1 On behalf of Council and staff, Cr Barry Roderick extended thanks to departing Councillors Sandy Bull, Peter Storey, Neal Hawes, Annaka Davis, and Steve Scragg for their time and the effort they had contributed on a voluntary basis on behalf of licence holders. Barry commented on each of the departing Councillors in turn, and presented them with a certificate of appreciation and acknowledgement of their time on the Council.

17.2 Sandy Bull had been involved in wildlife and an environmentalist all of his life. Sandy has made a tremendous commitment in the field and is still actively involved.

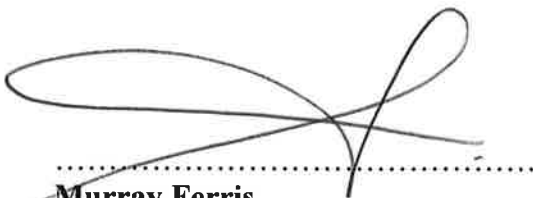
17.3 Sandy thanked Barry, Council and staff and felt that he was very lucky to have been involved. Sandy had been a warranted officer for some 40 years and he said it had been a pleasure knowing and working with this Council and staff.

17.4 Peter Storey was not present but had passed on his thanks saying he had enjoyed his time on Council and working with a team of professional staff. His particular concern is with the quality of fish in Lake Tarawera, and since working with Council and staff he now understands the processes and recognises that time is needed to establish what is occurring. Peter will continue to assist Fish & Game and staff with monitoring of the Te Wairoa trap.

- 17.5 While Neal Hawes needed a bit of a nudge to take on the Councillor role initially, he had become competent in his position, and a good solid Councillor bringing a lot of wisdom to the room.
- 17.6 Neal Hawes responded saying that he had enjoyed the last nine years on Council although it did take some time to get there. Neal thanked Council, he had enjoyed working with them, and to staff, he recalled a comment made by Rotorua Anglers' past member Terry Kelso, "you don't know how lucky you are...to have the staff, the facility, and the fantastic fishery".
- 17.7 Annaka Davis, a Councillor for 15 years had brought a different and unique angle to Council. Always frugal with licence holder money, she brought a lot to the table and a lot of professional expertise through her work in public health. Barry said that Council and staff would miss her contribution and wished her all the best for the future.
- 17.8 Annaka, like Neal Hawes, said that she was also encouraged to take up a position on Council, this being when she was actively involved with the Tauranga Anglers Club. At the time within her club there seemed to be an us and you mentality about Fish & Game so when she finally came to Council she was pleasantly surprised by the staff team, their expertise and credibility. She took this back to her club and hoped that she had altered some views. Her role within Environmental Health aligned with Council priorities of water quality and quantity, access, and social aspects. Annaka said that she was stepping down due to work commitments but hoped to be back in the future. Ultimately, she would love to see Fish & Game government funded and managed under one agency rather than 13. The highlight of her time on Council was the review of the Region's Sports Fish & Game Management Plan and she was particularly pleased about the production of lake maps to assist with interpretation of regulations.
- 17.8 Steve Scragg, who was unable to be present today, had joined Council early in the establishment of Fish & Game, around the same time as staff member Lloyd Gledhill. He said that in the early years it was a difficult time for staff and Council so it was a highlight for him getting through those difficult times with the Council establishing policies, and getting good staff and structures in place. Steve had enjoyed and gained a lot from his position on the Game Bird Habitat Trust which he would also miss.
- 17.9 Cr Murray Ferris added that over his time on Council there had been amazing passion and commitment around the table and those leaving today would be missed. Murray appreciated Annaka Davis' contribution and said that it would be great to have another female on the Council to continue to bring a different perspective.

18.0 MEETING CLOSED

- 18.1 Murray thanked Council and the staff for their support and wished everyone and their families a Merry Christmas and great New Year.
- 18.2 The meeting was closed at 3.25pm.



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Murray Ferris
Chairman

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

- 2.0 APOLOGIES**
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- 3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (1 NOVEMBER 2018)**
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- 8.0 2017-2018 PERFORMANCE REPORT**
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