



SPORTS FISH AND GAME MANAGEMENT PLAN

Eastern Fish and Game Council

Pursuant to section 17M(2)(g) of the Conservation Act 1987, I hereby approve the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan for the Eastern Fish and Game Region, administered by the Eastern Fish and Game Council.

Signed.....

Hon Dr Nick Smith
Minister of Conservation

Date.....22/7/14.....

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

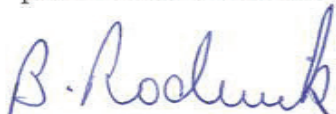
This Sports Fish and Game Management Plan sets out the strategic direction for managing the fish and game resource in the Eastern Fish and Game Region over the next ten year period. It describes the vision and objectives for management and defines policies and methods that will be used to work towards these longer term goals. This process involves identifying a wide range of issues and programmes that will maximise the ability of licence holders to enjoy the many opportunities that the sports fish and game bird resource in the region offers.

The Eastern Fish and Game Region is fortunate to have such a diversity of opportunities for sports fishing and game bird hunting. Licence holders target trophy rainbow and brown trout in the Rotorua lakes, Lake Waikaremoana has stunning scenery whilst the Waioeka, Rangitaiki and Ruakituri rivers offer superb back country trout fisheries. The region's widespread upland game bird population attracts game bird hunters from all over New Zealand while our wetlands provide constant opportunities for licence holders to hunt mallard, paradise shelduck, black swan and pukeko. The Eastern Fish and Game Council sells significantly more fish and game licenses than any other region in the North Island.

The Council is mindful that the management of the sports fish and game bird resource is a significant responsibility. On behalf of its licence holders, the Council constantly reviews its priorities, develops annual operational work plans and monitors the manager's performance in implementing this plan. The Council conducts its business under effective governance procedures and Council meetings are operated under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

The Eastern Fish and Game Council operates effectively within the Fish & Game New Zealand structure and commits resources to advancing sports fishing and game bird hunting nationally. The Council is mindful it commits to its functions and responsibilities under the Conservation Act and other legislation. The Council also ensures it takes the opportunity to advocate for licence holders in statutory processes, as well as committing resources to developing positive and mutually beneficial working relationships with key stakeholders such as Iwi and rural landowners.

This Sports Fish and Game Management Plan has been developed over an extended period with significant input from not only the Eastern Fish and Game Council and other anglers and hunters, but key stakeholders as well. We appreciate the efforts that individuals and agencies have made at various stages of the development of the plan and their submissions through the formal consultation process and believe that these contributions have resulted in a more robust plan that sets direction for licence holders and the wider community.



Barry Roderick
CHAIRMAN

CONTENTS

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN.....	1
PART ONE INTRODUCTION.....	4
A. Introduction	5
B. What is a Sports Fish and Game Management Plan?	6
C. Who is the Plan for?.....	7
D. Structure of the Plan	7
E. Monitoring Performance and Reporting.....	8
F. Plan Review	8
G. Notification	8
PART TWO MISSION STATEMENT.....	9
Mission Statement.....	10
PART THREE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.....	11
1. Species.....	12
2. Habitat.....	30
3. Angler and Hunter Participation.....	42
4. Public Awareness.....	50
5. Compliance.....	56
6. Licensing.....	60
7. Council.....	63
8. Planning and Reporting.....	66
9. Administration	69

PART FOUR RESOURCE DESCRIPTION.....	73
1 The Region	75
2. Species.....	77
3. Habitats	80
4. Anglers and Hunters	95
5. Eastern Fish and Game Council	96
 PART FIVE INTERPRETATION AND RELEVANT LEGISLATION.....	 97
1. Interpretation	98
2. Relevant Legislation	99
3. Notifying The Plan.....	102
 Appendix 1 Significant Sports Fish and Game Bird Habitats in the Eastern Fish and Game Region	 103
 Appendix 2 Land Managed by Eastern Fish and Game Council	 105
 Appendix 3 Iwi Rohe (Tribal Areas) Overlapping the Eastern Fish and Game Region	 107
 Appendix 4 Schedule of Sports Fish and Game Bird Species	 111
 Appendix 5 Extract From the Conservation Act 1987	 113

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION



Figure 1 – The Eastern Fish and Game Region

A. INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Fish and Game Region is one of twelve Fish and Game regions in New Zealand.

In 1990 the management of New Zealand's sports fish and game bird resource was restructured by an amendment to the Conservation Act 1987. The former Acclimatisation Societies were replaced by twelve regional Fish and Game Councils and one national Fish and Game Council. Each of these Councils became Crown Entities and then Public Entities with the passing of the Crown Entities Act 2004. They have specific functions, responsibilities and powers to manage sports fish and game birds, as specified in Sections 26Q, 26R, and 26S of the Act¹.

'Fish & Game New Zealand' is the operating name of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council together with the twelve regional Fish and Game Councils established to manage, maintain, and enhance the sports fish and game resource in the recreational interests of anglers and hunters. Fish and Game Councils are statutory managers of the sports fish and game bird resource and their sustainable recreational use by anglers and hunters New Zealand wide. The only exceptions to this are the sports fishery in the Lake Taupo catchment, and the game bird resource in the Chatham Islands, which are managed by the Department of Conservation.

The sports fish and game bird resource is the property of the Crown. Fish and Game Councils are empowered to administer the resource on the Crown's behalf, and to levy licence fees from anglers and hunters to cover the costs of doing so.

Fish and Game Councils receive no government funding to undertake their statutory purposes and activities are financed mainly through the sale of sports fish and game bird licences. Anglers and hunters purchase licences to fish or hunt and in return have input to the sports fish and game bird management in their region. Councillors are anglers and or hunters elected through a democratic process by whole season licence holders.

The main purpose of Fish and Game Councils is to:

*"Manage, maintain and enhance the sports fish and game resource in the recreational interests of anglers and hunters."*²

In fulfilling this purpose, the primary functions of Fish and Game Councils are to:

- *Assess and monitor sports fish and game bird populations, habitats and harvests.*
- *Assess and monitor angler and hunter satisfaction.*
- *Maintain and improve the sports fish and game bird resource.*
- *Provide information and promote angling and hunting.*
- *Represent the interests of anglers and hunters in the statutory planning process.*³

The Eastern Fish and Game Region (see Figure 1⁴) extends from Waihi Beach around the east coast to a few kilometres north of the Mohaka River mouth. It then follows the southern side of the Waiau River catchment, and south along the Kaimanawa ranges to Mount Ruapehu. From

¹ Because of their relevance to this Sports Fish and Game Management Plan Sections 26Q, 26R, and 26S of the Conservation Act 1987 are reproduced in full in Appendix 5, supra at 113.

² Conservation Act 1987, s 26Q(1).

³ Ibid, s 26(Q).

⁴ Supra at 4.

Mount Ruapehu, the region boundary runs north to Lake Maraetai, along the Mamaku Plateau and the Kaimai range to Waihi Beach.

The elected Council cannot consist of more than twelve members. Only those who hold a current adult whole season licence to fish for sports fish or hunt for game birds are eligible to become members of the Council through the election process.

Elections are held every three years, at which time all seats on the Council are up for re-election. The election process is democratic and prescribed in the Fish and Game Council Election Regulations 1990.

The Eastern Fish and Game Council represents the interests of more than 19,000 anglers and 4,300 hunters⁵ who purchase sports fish or game bird licences in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

B. WHAT IS A SPORTS FISH AND GAME MANAGEMENT PLAN?

It is intended that the goals, objectives, policies and methods set out in this plan will allow Eastern Fish and Game Council to meet its statutory obligations under the Conservation Act 1987 – to maximise the opportunities for sustainable use of the region’s sports fish and game bird resource by anglers and hunters.⁶

The Conservation Act 1987 requires each regional Fish and Game Council to prepare a draft sports fish and game management plan.⁷ The term ‘game’ is defined as those game bird species listed in the First Schedule of the Wildlife Act 1953 and included in this plan as Appendix 4A. Sports fish species are defined in the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 and included in this plan as Appendix 4B.⁸ In accordance with Section 17 L(4) of the Act, in preparing a plan, Fish and Game Councils shall have regard to:

- *The sustainability of sports fish and game birds in its fish and game region.*
- *The impact that the management of the sports fish and game bird resource will have on other resources and users of the environment.*
- *Provisions which maximise recreational opportunities for anglers and hunters.⁹*

The Conservation Act 1987 also requires that nothing in this plan “shall derogate from”:

- *Any provision of the Act or any other Act.*
- *Any policy approved under the Act or any other Act in respect to the region.*

⁵ Based on licences sold in the Eastern Fish and Game Region in 2010-2011.

⁶ Conservation Act 1987, s 17L(4)

⁷ Ibid, s 26Q(1)(e)(iii)

⁸ See Appendix 4 for a full list of sports fish and game bird species, supra at 111.

⁹ Conservation Act 1987, s 17L(4).

- *Any provision in any conservation management strategy or conservation management plan or freshwater fisheries management plan.*¹⁰

Eastern Fish and Game Council considers that this Sports Fish and Game Management Plan complies with the legislative requirements of sections 17L(3) and 17L(4) of the Conservation Act 1987.

C. WHO IS THE PLAN FOR?

This sports fish and game management plan addresses the management of the fish and game resource within the region while taking into consideration the reasonable views of all stakeholders. In this context, there are essentially four target audiences:

1. The councillors and staff of the Eastern Fish and Game Council who will use the plan to direct the management and recreational use of the sports fish and game bird resource in the region.
2. Statutory authorities such as the local authorities and central government agencies in the region must have regard to this plan once approved and recognise the priorities and intentions set out in the plan.
3. Fish and Game licence holders.
4. Other user groups of sports fish and game bird habitats.

This plan sets out to improve fish and game management in the Eastern Fish and Game Region by:

- Involving stakeholders in the management process.
- Reducing conflict among user groups.
- Improving the methods used in fish and game management efforts.
- Improving communication over fish and game management.
- Maximising angling and hunting opportunity in the region.

D. STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

The Eastern Fish and Game Council Sports Fish and Game Management Plan is divided into five main parts:

1. Introduction.
2. The Eastern Fish and Game Council's mission statement.
3. Identification of issues, objectives, and policies for the management of the resources described in Part Four.
4. Resource description which details the species, habitats, people, and administrative resources in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.
5. Interpretation and relevant legislation.

¹⁰ Conservation Act 1987, s 17L(3).

The structure of the Goals and Objectives section (Part Three) of this Management Plan is based on the nine functional areas currently used in Fish & Game New Zealand's annual operational work plans. These nine areas are used for management purposes in all regional Fish and Game Councils and at a national level. Use of the same areas in the Management Plan will make it easier to link future annual work plans to the Management Plan, and to relate future directions, rather than using an alternative structure.

E. MONITORING PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING

The Conservation Act 1987 requires Eastern Fish and Game Council to formulate and adopt an annual Operational Work Plan ("OWP").¹¹ The OWP includes reference to the goals, objectives and methods established in the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan, and it is reported against annually via the Annual Report and includes an audited Statement of Service Performance.¹² The Annual Report documents activities undertaken for the year and the degree to which objectives have been achieved by Council. The outcomes established in the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan and therefore regularly measured and reported on through the operational work planning process.

F. PLAN REVIEW

The Sports Fish and Game Management Plan will be reviewed no later than ten years from the date that it becomes operational. Amendments may be made during this time if required, and proposed amendments will undergo a similar consultation process as used for this plan. Amendments are carried out under the relevant provisions of the Conservation Act 1987.¹³

G. NOTIFICATION

Prior to submitting a draft of this management plan for approval by the Minister of Conservation, this plan has been prepared and notified according to the requirements of the Conservation Act 1987 to:¹⁴

- Daily newspapers circulating within the region
- The Director-General of Conservation
- Representatives of Iwi authorities
- Regional councils and territorial authorities
- Conservation Boards
- Angling and hunting organisations, and landowner and public interest groups.

¹¹ Conservation Act 1987, ss 26Q(1)(e)(ii), (3).

¹² Ibid, s 26X.

¹³ Ibid, s 17M (2)-(6).

¹⁴ Ibid, s 17M(2).

PART TWO

MISSION STATEMENT

MISSION STATEMENT

The Eastern Fish and Game Council is the statutory manager of sports fish and game birds in the Eastern Fish and Game Region. The fish and game resource in the region and the angling and hunting experiences that they provide are of national and international significance. The Sports Fish and Game Management Plan is a statutory document to direct the management of this resource, in the interests of anglers and hunters. The goals, objectives, and policies in the management plan allow for the maximisation of the opportunities provided by the fish and game resource in the region, and ensure that anglers and hunters have access to a sustainable sports fish and game bird resource in New Zealand.

In this context the Eastern Fish and Game Council's mission statement is:

To maintain and enhance opportunities for sustainable sports fish angling and game bird hunting.

PART THREE

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. SPECIES

INTRODUCTION

Eastern Fish and Game Council currently manages a wide range of sports fish and game bird species in the Eastern Fish and Game Region. Species management programmes are required for these species to ensure that the populations remain healthy, and to ensure that there is sufficient annual surplus to enable sustainable harvest by anglers and hunters. The availability of sports fish and game birds is the most fundamental component of angling and hunting. As a consequence, species management projects are a core activity for all regional Fish and Game Councils.

Goal 1: To manage sustainable populations of sports fish and game bird species for recreational harvest.

1.1 MONITORING

BACKGROUND

While the issues related to sports fish and game bird species management may vary, general management principles are similar for most species. A wide range of information is required to effectively manage populations of sports fish and game birds, and to enable the Eastern Fish and Game Council to make informed decisions regarding regulations and sustainable harvest levels. Estimates of population numbers, recruitment levels, natural mortality, growth, recreational harvest level, and age distributions are all considered when determining appropriate management approaches.

This information is provided by an extensive monitoring programme. The initiation of monitoring projects is based on factors such as the significance of species, whether monitoring is feasible, how robust and useful the information will be, and threats to the species.

1.1.1 ISSUES

1. Eastern Fish and Game Council requires information about the status and trends of sports fish and game bird populations in order to make management decisions.
2. Monitoring must be cost-effective and produce useful information.
3. Information requirements need to be prioritised where there is a lack of data on some sports fish and game bird populations in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.
4. It can be difficult to identify future information requirements.

5. Monitoring information may be necessary for effective involvement in Resource Management Act 1991 processes.

1.1.2 OBJECTIVE

To have adequate information relevant to the Eastern Fish and Game Council's needs for effective management of the sports fish and game bird resource.

POLICIES

1.1.2(a) To assess and monitor populations and harvest of sports fish and game bird species. The following criteria should be used when establishing monitoring priorities:

- Significance of species, in terms of recreational use, biological value and opportunities available.
- Threats.
- Consistent methodology.
- Cost-effectiveness.
- Usefulness of monitoring information.
- Annual population variability.

1.1.2(b) To maintain inventories that allow comparisons of sports fish and game bird populations, assessments of changes, and potential threats to these populations.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Surveys of representative river populations of sports fish.

Maintaining an information base through surveys of sports fish and game bird populations.

Development of a monitoring strategy for sports fish and game species.

Identification of gaps in the information available.

Monitoring of angler or hunter related impacts on population levels.

Monitoring of population characteristics in lake fisheries.

Sports fish trapping and tagging programmes, trend counts and banding studies of game bird species, or other appropriate game bird or sports fish monitoring techniques.

1.2 MANAGEMENT OF SPORTS FISH

BACKGROUND

A wide variety of sports fish species and fishing opportunities are available in the Eastern Fish and Game Region. Five species are present:

Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*),

Brown trout (*Salmo trutta*),

Brook char (*Salvelinus fontinalis*),

Tiger trout (*Salmo trutta* × *Salvelinus fontinalis*),

Tench (*Tinca tinca*).

The distribution and population characteristics of each of the sports fish species are described in the resource description of this management plan.¹⁵

These species contribute to the diversity that is a particular feature of the region. The fisheries management programme is based upon maximising this diversity while maintaining sustainable population levels. A number of management tools can be used to directly influence the size and characteristics of specific sports fish populations. Management tools include establishing annual angling conditions, liberations of hatchery reared fish, brood stock selection, and improving hatchery management practices. In the Eastern Fish and Game Region, salmonid sports fisheries are more important than non-salmonid sports fisheries.

REGULATIONS

Fish and Game Councils annually review and develop conditions that regulate the way fish are caught, season length, and daily bag limits. These regulations are principally to ensure that levels of harvest are sustainable, and to avoid inappropriate social interactions. Regulations should be based upon sound biological principles, and are also developed to provide for the legitimate range of preferences that anglers have when fishing. For example, fly and spin fishing may create conflicts on some waters where space is restricted.

The Eastern Fish and Game Council wishes to increase the range of angling opportunities available, particularly to youth and novice anglers. Regulations may be used to assist in achieving this by removing barriers to participation. This must be done without threatening the sustainability of sports fish populations.

LIBERATIONS

Hatchery liberations were previously the main fisheries management tool used in New Zealand. However, research has shown that liberations are a poor management technique except in a small number of situations. Liberations into self-sustaining sports fish populations may be damaging to the genetic integrity of wild populations, and hatchery fish are not usually adapted to compete with wild trout for food or habitat.

In most aquatic systems, the amount of habitat available for adult fish limits population levels. However, in specific cases, spawning or juvenile rearing habitat may be inadequate to support optimal levels of sports fish for angling. In these cases, liberations of hatchery reared stock may be required. The Rotorua lakes, for example, are an internationally significant trout fishery. They provide a range of conditions in which high numbers of trout can live and grow to maturity. Lack of spawning tributaries, however, means that trout populations are largely unable to sustain themselves at viable levels through natural recruitment. In order to maximise angler

¹⁵ See Part Four Resource Description, supra at 73.

opportunity, rainbow trout populations in most of the Rotorua lakes need to be enhanced through supplementary stocking. Liberations into such waterways must still meet all of the assessment criteria in policy 1.2.2 (b) which follows.

Supplementary stocking in appropriate habitats enables the Eastern Fish and Game Council to enhance the angling experience and to provide a wider range of angling opportunities. Lake fisheries that are recruitment limited can be actively managed for different characteristics with the use of supplementary stocking. For example, lower stocking rates in lakes with high fish growth potential can result in larger fish and lower catch rate fisheries.

Liberations of tagged sports fish are used to monitor the fishery. Returns of tagged sports fish provide important information for fisheries management decisions. Liberations that are for monitoring purposes generally involve relatively small numbers of fish, and must meet criteria listed in policy 1.2.2 (c) which follows.

Anglers favour a wide range of angling opportunities, and future satisfaction surveys may indicate a desire for new opportunities to be made available. Liberations of hatchery reared sports fish enable Fish and Game Councils to provide a range of species or variants to anglers. Investigations into use of additional species or changes in genetic characteristics may reveal additional opportunities to improve the quality of the angling experience. Any investigations should consider the effects on existing sports fish populations, on existing native fish populations, on indigenous flora and fauna, and on natural character values. Fish and Game Councils would also need to meet legislative requirements before new species or variants could be introduced to water bodies in the region¹⁶. For example, an Assessment of Effects may be required, as well as Environmental Risk Management Agency approval under Hazardous Substances/New Organisms legislation.

The Eastern Fish and Game Council acknowledges that the original liberations of sports fish into some lakes and rivers in the region may have had adverse effects on indigenous fish populations. Although trout compete with and prey on some species of indigenous fish, it is also recognised that the effects of changes in land use on indigenous fish habitats have been a major contributor to the declines in population levels of some species. With regard to indigenous fish, the Council is committed to recognising the conditions in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Conservation and the New Zealand Fish and Game Council, particularly that section that precludes the liberation of sports fish into waters in their natural state that have never previously held sports fish. In addition the Eastern Fish and Game Council recognise that under the Te Arawa Lakes (Fisheries) Regulations 2006 the Te Arawa Lakes Trust has a responsibility to manage taonga species in fourteen of the Rotorua/Te Arawa Lakes and are committed to working with Te Arawa Lakes Trust on matters of mutual interest.

LIBERATIONS OF OTHER FISH SPECIES

Uncontrolled or unauthorised transfers of fish may threaten sports fisheries and Eastern Fish and Game Council's management of the fisheries. Pest species such as koi carp are present in the Waikato River system, while catfish are present in both the Waikato River system and Lake

¹⁶ The transfer or release of live aquatic life into any freshwater (including the liberation of sports fish) is regulated by the Conservation Act 1987, s26ZM, and the Conservation General Policy, Policy 4.1 (i).

Taupo. Further transfers of these species could have significant negative impacts on lake and river fisheries in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

Use of grass carp as a weed control measure in drains, canals, lakes, and ponds is becoming increasingly popular. Organisations or individuals wishing to introduce grass carp, or other fish species, to waterways must obtain approval from the Minister of Conservation. Fish and Game Councils may make submissions to such applications in opposition to or support of fish transfers. The Eastern Fish and Game Council also has direct regulatory authority under Regulation 59 of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983.

The Eastern Fish and Game Council is aware of the threats that authorised and unauthorised fish introductions may have on the sports fishery and game birds. Measures should be undertaken to ensure that transfers of fish do not compromise this resource. The Council will review applications to transfer fish on a case by case basis and may oppose them where there will be adverse effects on sports fish or game bird values.

COMMERCIALISATION OF SPORTS FISH

There is pressure from some sectors of the community to legalise trout farming and to commercialise the sale of these species. Fish & Game New Zealand continues to oppose any commercialisation of trout, char, or other recreational sports fish species. Increased risk of disease in recreational fisheries and the risk of increased illegal poaching and trading of wild sports fish would result from the commercialisation of further species of sports fish.

Fish and Game Councils often receive requests for sports fish for display purposes. Sports fish from the Eastern Fish and Game Council's Ngongotaha hatchery may be provided when applications meet criteria that ensure that there will be no adverse effects on recreational fisheries and where there are advantages in terms of education, promotion, or other benefits for Fish & Game New Zealand.

FISH STRANDINGS

Fish strandings may occasionally occur through events such as flooding, severe droughts or works involving river diversions. Previous fish salvage exercises have been expensive, with little benefit to the resource although at times there may be public relations benefits. Financial costs incurred by Eastern Fish and Game Council against benefits gained need to be assessed before making decisions as to the level of involvement of staff. Where another individual or organisation is at fault in relation to sports fish strandings, it is their responsibility to salvage those fish.¹⁷

1.2.1 ISSUES

1. Eastern Fish and Game Council needs to manage the sports fisheries to provide for a sustainable harvest.
2. The Eastern Fish and Game Council wishes to maximise the range of angling opportunities available, and to encourage anglers to participate.

¹⁷ The transfer or release of live aquatic life into any freshwater (including the liberation of sports fish) is regulated by the Conservation Act 1987, s26ZM, and the Conservation General Policy, Policy 4.1 (i).

3. Liberations into self-sustaining sports fish populations may be damaging to the genetic integrity of wild sports fish populations.
4. The Rotorua lakes provide a range of conditions in which high numbers of trout can live and grow to maturity. However, a lack of spawning tributaries means that trout populations are largely unable to sustain themselves at adequate levels in many of the lakes through natural recruitment.
5. Liberations of sports fish may have adverse effects on indigenous fish species.
6. Pest species such as cat fish and koi carp are present in some parts of the Eastern Fish and Game Region, for example, the Waikato River system. Further releases of these or other species may threaten river and lake sports fisheries in the region.
7. There is pressure from some sectors of the community to legalise trout farming and to commercialise the sale of further species of sports fish.
8. Fish and Game Councils often receive requests for sports fish for display purposes, or for liberations to private waters.
9. Fish strandings may occasionally occur through flooding or severe droughts. Strandings may also be the result of works involving river diversions or drainage of tailraces on hydro-electricity schemes.
10. The effects of climate change are likely to become an increasing issue in the management of sports fish.

1.2.2 OBJECTIVE

Ensure the maintenance and management of sports fish populations in the Eastern Fish and Game Region to maximise angler opportunity.

POLICIES

1.2.2(a) To manage harvest by establishing and administering sports fishing conditions that maximise opportunities for anglers without adversely affecting the sustainability, quality, or diversity of the sports fishery. Conditions should:

- Be based on sound biological principles.
- Maximise diverse angling opportunities without increasing angler conflicts.
- Enhance the angling experience.
- Be simple to understand and enforceable by law.

1.2.2(b) To liberate hatchery reared sports fish to enhance angling opportunities in areas that meet the following criteria:

- Where suitable adult habitat exists, but there is insufficient natural recruitment to sustain optimal natural populations.

- Where there is no significant adverse effect on existing wild sports fish populations. A significant adverse effect is one that will result in loss of angling opportunity or threaten the sustainability of the population.
- Where benefits obtained outweigh costs.
- Where legislative requirements regulating the transfer or release of live aquatic life into freshwater can be met, including S 26ZM of the Conservation Act 1987 and the Conservation General Policy 4.1(i).
- Council will not liberate sports fish into waters in their natural state that have never previously held sports fish.
- Where adverse effects on existing biodiversity values or existing natural character in water bodies that have not previously held sports fish (excluding waters in their natural state) can be avoided, remedied, or mitigated. Department of Conservation and other relevant agencies will be consulted as to these effects.
- Where fisheries are capable of being maintained at optimal levels through natural recruitment, liberations will not take place unless there is a catastrophic loss of the fishery.

1.2.2(c) To liberate hatchery reared fish for monitoring purposes in areas that meet the following criteria:

- Where there is no significant adverse effect on existing wild sports fish populations. A significant adverse effect is one that will result in loss of angling opportunity or threaten the sustainability of the population.
- Where benefits obtained outweigh costs.
- Council will not liberate sports fish into natural waterways that have never previously held sports fish.
- Where adverse effects on existing biodiversity values or existing natural character in water bodies that have not previously held sports fish can be avoided, remedied, or mitigated. Department of Conservation and other relevant agencies will be consulted as to these effects.
- Where legislative requirements regulating the transfer or release of live aquatic life into freshwater can be met, including S 26ZM of the Conservation Act 1987 and the Conservation General Policy 4.1(i).

1.2.2(d) To consider the use of additional sports fish species or variants as a means of enhancing the range of angling opportunity. Such liberations will be considered where they meet the criteria in policy 1.2.2 (b) above. Other considerations will include:

- Any adverse impacts on sports fishing opportunities.
- Any adverse impacts on existing populations of native fish. The Department of Conservation is to be consulted as to these impacts.
- Any relevant legislative requirements, for example s26ZM of Conservation Act 1987, Policy 4.1 (i) of Conservation General Policy, or Environmental Protection Authority approval.

1.2.2(e) To oppose any unauthorised transfer or release of fish.

1.2.2(f) To consider applications for the transfer or release of sports fish species on a case-by-case basis. Applications will be opposed where sports fish or game interests will be adversely affected.

1.2.2(g) To oppose further commercialisation of the sale of recreational sports fish species, or of access to the sports fish resource.

1.2.2(h) To provide sports fish for display or research purposes that meet the following criteria:

- There is some benefit to the sport.
- Any fish provided should be obtained from hatchery sources rather than wild populations.
- Applications for sports fish for display or research purposes must meet legal requirements.

1.2.2(i) To salvage stranded sports fish stocks where the following criteria can be met:

- Benefits to Fish & Game New Zealand, including public perception, are greater than the cost involved.
- Inaction will result in significant loss to the fishery. A significant loss is one that will result in loss of angling opportunity and threaten the sustainability of the population.
- Legislative requirements regulating the transfer or release of live aquatic life into freshwater can be met.

1.2.2(j) To optimise hatchery practices to enhance angling opportunity.

1.2.2.(k) To assist water body managers in the management of sports fish populations where the following criteria are met:

- Adverse effects on conservation values have been identified, and either;
- The fishery no longer provides angler opportunities and is unlikely to provide angler opportunities in the future, or;
- The fishery does not provide a source of genetic stock.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Development and administration of an Anglers Notice policy designed to control practices that threaten the sustainability of the sports fish resource or the quality of angling experiences. Conditions may include size limits, creel limits, season conditions, closed areas, gear restrictions or other appropriate controls.

Use of monitoring and research information in the development of conditions and identification of components of sports fisheries that may be threatened.

Liberations of hatchery reared sports fish using criteria set out in this Management Plan and available information.

Optimisation of supplementary stocking rates, liberation sites, age at release, and timing of liberations.

Monitoring of hatchery reared trout in areas they are released.

Fulfilling necessary legal requirements and consultation before liberations are carried out.

Fulfilling necessary legal requirements and appropriate consultation before the introduction of new sports fish species is carried out.

Use of statutory processes and advocacy to prevent further commercialisation of the sale of recreational sports fish species.

Assessment of applications to display sports fish or use sports fish for research based on the appropriate criteria, and maintenance of an inventory of permits allocated.

Fish salvage operations will be carried out where the above fish salvage criteria are met. Authority to salvage fish will be granted in other cases where appropriate.

1.3 HATCHERY

BACKGROUND

With the exception of Lake Rotorua itself, the internationally renowned fisheries of the Rotorua lakes are strongly dependent on liberations of hatchery reared fish. Due to limited natural wild recruitment in many Rotorua lakes the hatchery provides supplementary stocks of trout to maintain adequate populations to support these heavily utilised fisheries. All sports fish liberated in the Eastern Fish and Game Region are produced at the Ngongotaha hatchery. Further to the management requirements for hatchery reared sports fish in the region, Eastern Fish and Game Council fulfils a statutory requirement of Fish and Game Councils to:

“...maintain the hatchery and breeding programmes, where required, for stocking or restocking the sports fisheries...”¹⁸

The resource description contains information on the hatchery assets and agreements with other organisations where there are shared facilities.

MAINTENANCE OF HATCHERY OPERATIONS

Operation of the hatchery is an integral part of the activities carried out in the Eastern Fish and Game Region. The hatchery is the largest in New Zealand, and supplies sports fish to a number of other Fish and Game regions. As with all of the Eastern Fish and Game Council’s activities, it is important that the hatchery is operated as a cost effective unit.

¹⁸ Conservation Act 1987, s26Q(1)(b)(ii).

The hatchery programme is complex, with a number of factors to be considered. Production of high quality, disease free fish requires high standards of hygiene, regular disease checking, stringent quarantine procedures, accurate record keeping, high quality equipment, and a high quality, reliable water supply. Protection of the hatchery spring and its catchment is of critical importance. All hatchery reared fish are fin clipped or marked so that they can be identified. A limited number of hatchery reared fish are tagged for the Datawatch monitoring programme.

SELECTIVE BREEDING

Most of the brood stock for the hatchery is obtained from the Te Wairoa Stream, a tributary of Lake Tarawera. A breeding programme has been in place for a number of years, based upon the selection of large, late maturing fish that have shown the ability to survive in the lakes and grow rapidly. It is important that genetic diversity is maintained, so wild fish are used preferentially for crosses or collected for brood stock. Other sources of brood stock are used where specific strains are required. Crosses between species are used to produce hybrid sports fish such as tiger trout, and additional crosses or use of developmental interventions may be considered in the future in an effort to provide for the aspirations of anglers.

HATCHERY PRACTICES

The hatchery runs as an efficient production unit, and also has the ability to add to research programmes through changes to management practices. Modifications to hatchery management processes can also add knowledge and opportunities to the lakes fishery programmes. Changes in the size of fish liberated, age at release, and timing of liberations add to the ability to affect fish growth and behaviour.

1.3.1 ISSUES

1. The success of liberation and monitoring programmes depends on the production of high quality, disease-free fish.
2. Other Fish and Game regions rely on fish sourced from the Eastern Fish and Game Council hatchery.
3. It is important to maintain adequate genetic diversity in fish stocks.
4. Hatchery practices and liberations can influence the quality or size of sports fish produced for liberation and in the harvest.
5. The hatchery water supply is critically important to the running of the hatchery. There is a high risk if the supply fails, becomes contaminated, or if the necessary consents and approvals lapse.

1.3.2 OBJECTIVE

Production of high quality sports fish for sports fish management programmes that maximise angler opportunities and meet liberation criteria.

POLICIES

- 1.3.2(a)** To operate a cost-effective sports fish hatchery.

1.3.2(b) To produce sufficient numbers of high quality sports fish for liberation in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

1.3.2(c) To produce sufficient numbers of high quality sports fish for supply to other Fish and Game regions and to other organisations that meet the legal requirements.

1.3.2(d) To maintain a high degree of genetic diversity in supplementary stocked trout populations.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Operation of fish traps on lakes tributaries to annually collect brood stock, ova, and milt for hatchery production from wild sports fish populations where possible.

Maintenance of quality, disease-free stock.

Protection of hatchery water supply, and contingency planning to manage disruptions.

Fin clipping or other identification of hatchery reared sports fish.

Provision of suitable equipment to manage efficient production.

Maintenance of appropriate hygiene and quarantine measures, and contingency planning to manage disease risks.

Effective record keeping of crosses and liberations.

1.4 MANAGEMENT OF GAME BIRDS

BACKGROUND

The Eastern Fish and Game Region supports a wide range of game bird species, and hunter use of the resource is relatively high. Distribution and populations of the following species present in the region are discussed in the resource description:

Mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*),

Grey duck (*A. superciliosa*),

Shoveler duck (*A. rhynchotis*),

Paradise shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*),

Black swan (*Cygnus atratus*),

Pukeko (*Porphyrio porphyrio*),

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*),

California quail (*Callipepla californica*),

Bobwhite quail (*Colinus virginianus*),

Brown quail (*Synoicus ypsilophorus*),

Red legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa*).

The region is currently divided into four game bird management areas, A1, A2, B1, and B2. These are described in more detail in the resource description of this management plan.¹⁹

While the same management tools and principles are used in each of these areas, species management priorities vary as a result of the different habitats and levels of populations available. Eastern Fish and Game Council aims to maximise hunter opportunity, while maintaining sustainable levels of each game bird population. Maximising hunter opportunity includes providing for a diversity of species, abundance, and quality of the resource. The quality and quantity of habitat in the region has a large influence on population size of some game bird species, and habitat management is particularly important in the management of these species.²⁰ Council also recognises the potential impacts that some game bird species may have on other bird species and users of the environment.

REGULATIONS

Game bird hunting regulations are used to make species available to hunters, as well as regulating the manner in which hunting takes place and the total number of birds harvested. This ensures that recreational opportunities are maximised, populations are maintained at sustainable levels, and harvest is optimised.

Information from monitoring programmes such as hunter surveys, trend counts and banding is used to help establish regulations and to monitor their effectiveness. Species sustainability and diversity, maximising hunter opportunity, and reduction of potential effects on other users of the environment are all considered in the development of appropriate regulations.

LIBERATIONS

Liberations of existing game bird species, or new species to the region, are another tool used in game bird management. Liberations are used for the introduction of new species to an area, but are not viable for maintaining widespread populations. Species such as red legged partridge have been released in the past in parts of the Eastern Fish and Game Region, but did not successfully establish. This experience highlights the need to ensure that future game bird releases are adapted to the available habitat, that the species will be self-sustaining, that releases will not detract from the hunting resource already present, and do not adversely affect non-game bird species or biodiversity.

Subject to approval by the Minister of the annual Game Notice, registered Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions are permitted to liberate game birds in accordance with Council established policy, and Department of Conservation permits to release birds. Such areas

¹⁹ See Part Four Resource Description *supra* at 73.

²⁰ Habitat management is discussed in Part Three, Chapter 2. Habitat, *supra* at 30.

provide opportunities for hunters using guiding services within the property, and also help to stock areas outside the boundary as birds move around.

CROP PROTECTION

Some game bird species have adapted very well to pastoral land uses. Species such as paradise shelduck may have adverse effects on other users of the environment and on protected species through their feeding and flocking habits. Increasing encroachment of urban development onto wetland areas and riparian margins also creates conflicts. Pukeko, in particular, may be viewed as a problem in some urban situations. The extent of crop predation varies greatly within different parts of the region and from year to year.

Although Eastern Fish and Game Council does not have a statutory obligation to be involved in crop protection, they have historically taken action in some circumstances. Where game bird species are shown to have an adverse effect on pasture or crops, the Council should seek to respond in a cost effective manner. At present, when the issuing of a permit to disturb is the most appropriate method, Council must obtain a permit from the Department of Conservation. The Eastern Fish and Game Council believes that changes to the legislation to empower Fish and Game Councils to issue an Authority for the disturbance of game birds will be a more efficient system for dealing with crop protection problems than at present.

DISEASE AND PREDATION

Waterfowl are susceptible to avian botulism through ingestion of a toxin produced by *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria. Botulism is a paralytic disease, resulting in death, and can be a major problem in parts of the Eastern Fish and Game Region during the summer. Warm summer temperatures, combined with decomposing vegetation and invertebrates, are ideal conditions for the botulism bacteria to activate and produce toxin. Concentrated populations of waterfowl, such as those on many of the lakes, are particularly susceptible to outbreaks of botulism. Outbreaks may threaten local waterfowl populations, or may create negative publicity for Fish & Game New Zealand in areas of high public profile like the Rotorua lake front.

Predators such as stoats, weasels, rats, ferrets, feral cats and Australasian harriers can cause problems during the game bird breeding season in particular. Predator control specifically to benefit game birds is not cost effective over wide areas. However, it may be advantageous in specific and smaller areas, particularly where habitat rehabilitation or enhancement projects are underway.

HOLDING OR BREEDING GAME BIRDS

Requests are sometimes received from organisations or individuals to hold or breed game birds in captivity. Fish and Game Councils advise the Department of Conservation on the issuing of authorities to hold waterfowl or upland game birds²¹. Eastern Fish and Game Council needs to ensure that birds held in captivity do not threaten the sustainability of game birds in the wild, and that they are kept in hygienic and humane conditions. A set of criteria have been developed for applicants to meet before applications are considered. The Eastern Fish and Game Council

²¹ Section 53 of the Wildlife Act 1953 requires the prior written authority of the Director-General to capture, hold, breed, rear, or liberate game birds.

believes that empowering Council to issue Authorities to hold or breed game birds would be a more efficient system for dealing with requests than at present.

1.4.1 ISSUES

1. Hunters want to maximise hunting diversity and opportunities.
2. Population levels are highly dependent on the quality and quantity of habitat available, and vary within the Eastern Fish and Game Region as a result of habitat availability and seasonal conditions.
3. Regulations must ensure that levels of harvest are sustainable both regionally and sub-regionally.
4. There is no national coordinated approach to monitoring and a lack of consistency in methodology between Fish and Game regions for some species.
5. Some game bird populations receive very high harvest pressures, and some species are more vulnerable to over-harvesting than others.
6. It is not economically viable to maintain widespread populations of game birds through liberations funded by licence sales.
7. New liberations or existing populations of introduced game birds may have adverse effects on indigenous species.
8. Some game bird species may have adverse effects on other users of the rural environment and aviation when they congregate in large groups. Pukeko may be a problem in urban and rural areas.
9. Outbreaks of avian botulism are a problem, particularly when they occur in high profile areas such as the Rotorua lake front.
10. Pest control may be necessary to enhance the productivity of game bird populations.
11. Registered Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions need to meet requirements for operation in accordance with Council policy.
12. Some species, such as grey duck, are classified as game birds even though they are considered to be critically endangered. Other species, such as grey teal, are fully protected when it is likely that sustainable harvest opportunities may exist.

1.4.2 OBJECTIVE

Maintenance and enhancement of populations and diversity of game bird species in the Eastern Fish and Game Region to maximise hunting opportunities.

POLICIES

1.4.2(a) To manage harvest by implementing game bird regulations that:

- Maximise hunter opportunity.

- Ensure the sustainability, quality, and diversity of the game bird resource.
- Are based on sound biological principles.
- Seek acceptable standards of hunting behaviour.

1.4.2(b) To consider proposals to introduce new species of game birds to the region, establish existing species in areas where they do not currently exist, or reclassify non game bird species as game birds. Considerations will include:

- Any adverse effects on existing game bird populations, such as those that result in loss of hunting opportunity or threaten the sustainability or genetic integrity of populations.
- Any adverse effects on existing populations of native fauna and flora. The Department of Conservation is to be consulted as to these effects.
- Whether suitable habitat is available.
- Whether liberations optimise population size for increased hunter opportunities.
- Are the liberated species likely to be self-sustaining.
- Whether benefits gained outweigh costs.

1.4.2(c) To respond where there are significant adverse effects of game birds on natural resources and other users of the environment. Significance will be assessed on the basis of:

- Number of birds present.
- Recreational and ecological significance of the game bird population involved.
- Value of resource affected.
- Extent of impact of birds on the crop involved.
- Whether there is a significant effect on indigenous flora or fauna, where Department of Conservation will be consulted as to the effects.
- Effects on amenity values .
- Effects on aviation safety.

1.4.2(d) To seek legislative authority for the issue of permits to disturb or destroy game birds for crop protection purposes and to hold game birds in captivity for display purposes.

1.4.2(e) To respond to incidents of disease outbreaks and predation in game bird populations where the following criteria can be met:

- Large numbers of birds are affected or there are public awareness issues involved.
- Response will be cost-effective.
- Staff resources are available.
- Pest control measures will meet all legislative requirements and the appropriate authorities will be consulted.
- Where appropriate Eastern Fish and Game Council will seek that the agencies responsible manage the effects.

1.4.2(f) To advise the Department of Conservation in the issuing of authorities to hold or breed game birds. Advice for issue of authorities will be based on the following:

- Birds are to be obtained from an authorised New Zealand breeder.

- Eastern Fish and Game Council may inspect the birds at any time and advise changes to living conditions where appropriate.
- Eastern Fish and Game Council must provide authorisation for release of any birds into the wild.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Submission of game season conditions for inclusion in the Game Gazette Notice. Conditions should be based on sound biological principles, maximise hunter opportunity, ensure the sustainability, quality, and diversity of the game bird resource, and set standards of acceptable hunting behaviour.

Use of population and harvest monitoring results to regulate populations of individual species, and work with other regional Fish and Game Councils to monitor common populations.

Consultation with affected parties when considering any proposal to introduce new species to the region, establish existing species in areas where they do not currently exist, or reclassify non game bird species as game birds. Proposals will be assessed against the criteria listed in Policy 1.4.2(b).

Issue of an authority to disturb or destroy birds, or advise the Department of Conservation for issue of an authority where there is no prior agreement with the Department of Conservation enabling the Eastern Fish and Game Council to issue an authority itself.

Coordination with New Zealand Fish and Game Council and other regional Fish and Game Councils in seeking changes to legislation regarding authority to disturb or destroy game birds and authority to hold or breed game birds.

Advice to landowners regarding management measures to avoid or reduce crop predation, and assist with the scaring and dispersion of birds if appropriate.

Assisted organised hunts where game birds are having an adverse effect on natural resources.

Appropriate bag limits and conditions for control of game bird species.

Maintenance of inventories of authorities issued to disturb game birds and of authorities to hold or breed game birds in captivity.

Undertake game bird rescue where the policy criteria are met, and seek assistance for game bird rescue from other agencies or individuals where appropriate.

Consideration of an applicant's ability to meet criteria for holding or breeding game birds in captivity.

Provision of advice to Department of Conservation to issue permits for game birds in captivity.

Management plans where appropriate for particular species or game bird populations.

1.5 RESEARCH

BACKGROUND

The availability of new information in the future will allow Eastern Fish and Game Council to more effectively manage the sports fish and game bird resource in the region. Research into issues such as maximising sustainable harvest, optimal sports fish stocking rates and liberation timing for the Rotorua lakes, and management techniques for back country wilderness fisheries is essential to optimise angler and hunter satisfaction while ensuring sustainability of the sports fish and game bird resource. Whether hunting has an impact on game bird population sizes and the extent of this impact, is another priority for research.

Other areas of research that the Council supports are the effects that sports fish and game birds may have on indigenous flora and fauna, and the potential effects of other fish species, such as koi carp and catfish, on the fishery. Habitat-related research is also promoted by the Council, and research may be undertaken into these areas where necessary if a specific problem has been identified.

1.5.1 ISSUES

1. Ongoing and up to date knowledge needs to be obtained to enable optimal management of some sports fish and game bird populations.
2. Ongoing and up to date knowledge needs to be obtained to optimise angler and hunter opportunities and satisfaction.
3. In particular cases it may be necessary to obtain information on the impacts of sports fish or game birds, or angling and hunting, on other natural resources or users of the environment.
4. Research and monitoring requirements for an optimal harvest regime are expensive. Because it is unlikely that funding will be available to research all species, they will need to be prioritised.

1.5.2 OBJECTIVE

Research that allows a better understanding of its resource and allows the Eastern Fish and Game Council to make appropriate management decisions for the benefit of anglers and hunters and the fish and game resource.

POLICIES

1.5.2(a) To identify research requirements.

1.5.2(b) To undertake appropriate research programmes that meet the following criteria:

- Research must be related to the priority management needs of the Eastern Fish and Game Council.
- There must be overall benefit to the goals and objectives of the Eastern Fish and Game Council, the fish and game resource, and anglers and hunters.

1.5.2(c) To support and recommend appropriate national sports fish and game bird research programmes.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Priority for research projects that demonstrate long-term benefits for sports fish and game bird management, anglers, and hunters. Particularly projects researching optimal harvest regimes.

Support for research into the impacts of other species or external threats on sports fish or game bird populations.

Support for research into the impacts of sports fish or game birds or angling and hunting on other natural resources or users of the environment.

Development and implementation of Rotorua lakes fisheries research strategy.

Liaison with New Zealand Fish and Game Council and other regional Fish and Game Councils, Department of Conservation, and research agencies to identify research areas and opportunities for collaborative effort.

Use of external research providers where appropriate.

Seeking external funding and working with government funding agencies, where research may result in benefits to the community.

2. HABITAT

INTRODUCTION

There is a direct relationship between the abundance of sports fish and game birds and the quality and quantity of habitat available to them. Habitat maintenance and enhancement is therefore a primary tool in the management of the Eastern Fish and Game Council sports fish and game bird resource. Trout require high water quality, and aquatic ecosystems that provide spawning habitat, rearing habitat, and a regular food supply. Game birds also require appropriate nesting habitat, loafing, and feeding sites.

In the Eastern Fish and Game Region, sports fish habitat consists mainly of rivers, large lakes, and canals. Game birds inhabit wetlands, rivers, lakes, drains, canals, riparian margins, sand dunes, and plantation forest areas. Sports fish and game bird habitats are described in the Resource Description section of this plan.²² The wide range of habitats available contribute to the diversity of angling and hunting opportunities that the region offers.

Nutrient increases in waterways, damage to riparian margins, water abstraction, development of hydro-electricity schemes, vegetation clearance, and river control works have negatively impacted sports fish and game bird habitats. Some species, such as paradise shelduck, have benefited from changes in land use. For most species, however, changes in land use and land management practices continue to reduce the quality and quantity of available habitat. Less than 1% of the original wetland habitat remains in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

Addressing adverse impacts on habitats, and maintaining and enhancing remaining habitats are areas that the Eastern Fish and Game Council should focus on as a means of managing sports fish and game bird habitats to maximise recreational opportunities for anglers and hunters.

Goal 2: To manage, maintain, and enhance sports fish and game bird habitats to maximise recreational opportunities for anglers and hunters.

2.1 HABITAT MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

BACKGROUND

STATUTORY PLANNING PROCESSES

As the sustainability of sports fish and game bird populations is dependent on the availability of quality habitats, habitat maintenance and enhancement is an important tool in the management of the sports fish and game resource. Ensuring that sufficient habitat is available to maintain

²² Part Four Resource Description, supra at 73.

self-sustaining populations of sports fish and game birds and angling and hunting opportunities has become a major activity for Fish & Game New Zealand in recent years.

Eastern Fish and Game Council is required to “...represent the interests and aspirations of anglers and hunters in the statutory planning process”.²³ In addition to the Conservation Act 1987 and Wildlife Act 1953, there are a number of other Statutes that allow the Council to promote sports fish and game bird habitat values.

Habitat protection is also the responsibility of local authorities (Resource Management Act 1991) and the Department of Conservation (Conservation Act 1987). Eastern Fish and Game Council will continue to seek the implementation of these statutory obligations where agencies are failing in their habitat protection responsibilities.

Resource Management Act 1991

The Resource Management Act 1991 (“RMA”) is the over-riding legislation aimed at the sustainable management of New Zealand’s natural and physical resources. Regional and District Councils share the responsibility for resource management, and therefore make many of the decisions that may impact on sports fish and game bird habitats. The RMA provides the opportunity for Fish and Game Councils to have input into these planning processes, and to represent the interests and aspirations of anglers and hunters. Statutory authorities are also required to take note of provisions in Sports Fish and Game Management Plans in their own planning processes.

There are 4 Regional Councils, 13 District Councils, and 1 Unitary Authority within the Eastern Fish and Game Region. Through submissions to regional and district plans and resource consents, the Eastern Fish and Game Council is able to advocate that the habitat of trout and game birds is not adversely impacted by development proposals, and that angling and hunting values are maintained and enhanced.

In advocating for the interests of anglers and hunters, the Eastern Fish and Game Council seeks to minimise adverse effects of activities on habitats and to protect recreational and access values. In some cases, concerns of the Council may correspond to those of other organisations and stakeholder groups, while in others it may conflict. Where it is not possible to avoid the adverse effects of activities, the best outcome may be to seek solutions in terms of remediation or mitigation.

The Local Government Act 2002 defines the roles and functions of local government. Through this Act, the Council is able to make submissions on draft annual plans and long-term strategies. These are the plans under which local authorities implement the objectives in their regional and district plans. The Council is also able to make submissions to strategies prepared under the Biosecurity Act 1993 and to have input to decisions made under the Reserves Act 1977.

NON-STATUTORY HABITAT MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

Non statutory processes may also be used to achieve protection of sports fish and game bird habitats. Proactive cooperation with other resource management organisations, Iwi, interest

²³ Conservation Act 1987, s 26Q (1)(e)(i).

groups, and the wider community can be used to realise positive outcomes for fish and game management. Anglers and hunters make major contributions to habitat protection and enhancement work. Eastern Fish and Game Council recognises the benefits of these activities, and will continue to support such initiatives through facilitation and assistance where appropriate.

A significant quantity of sports fish and game bird habitat is on private land. It is important for the Council to encourage land managers to create, maintain, and enhance sports fish and game bird habitats on their properties. Relationship building with landowners, representative groups and industry also helps to ensure habitats are recognised and maintained or enhanced. Covenants are one way of ensuring that these areas are protected. Funding from sources such as the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust is another means of assisting the creation of additional habitat in the region.

Many sports fish and game bird habitats are in a degraded state, but have the potential to be rehabilitated. Maintenance and enhancement carried out by the Eastern Fish and Game Council may involve activities such as earthworks, temporary lowering of water levels in wetlands, control of invasive vegetation, desilting, or other modifications to stream beds. Such habitat enhancement projects may have effects on other natural resources or users of the environment. Council will undertake appropriate consultation, and obtain the necessary approvals, to ensure that any adverse effects are considered and adequately provided for.

2.1.1 ISSUES

1. There are a number of activities that may adversely affect the quality or quantity of sports fish and game bird habitats. Some of the major impacts on habitats in the Eastern Fish and Game Region include:
 - Gravel extraction from Bay of Plenty and East Coast rivers.
 - Stock access to lakes, rivers, wetlands, and their margins.
 - Hydro-electricity development.
 - Drainage of wetlands and their margins.
 - Urbanisation and rural subdivision.
 - Water abstraction.
 - Weed invasion.
 - Point source and non-point source discharges to waterways.
 - River and drain management.
 - Changes in land use and land management practices.
 - The introduction of pest fish species such as koi carp or cat fish.

2. There is very little shallow wetland habitat in the region, particularly in the Gisborne area.
3. There has been extensive loss of wetland habitat through land development in the Tauranga, Whakatane, Rotorua, and Taupo areas. This means that the remaining wetland areas are highly significant as waterfowl habitat. Many remaining wetlands have been damaged or modified through activities such as changing water levels, the introduction of pest plants, grazing, and adjoining land uses.
4. Land development and management may threaten freshwater ecosystems.
5. Many areas of sports fish and game bird habitat are on private land.
6. Game bird habitat is very susceptible to land management practices.
7. Modification of lowland rivers, particularly in the Bay of Plenty, has adversely affected trout habitat and angling values.
8. Land management practices in upper catchments have a large influence on downstream habitats.
9. Restrictions on fish passage, such as from dams and perched culverts, can limit sports fish habitat and populations.
10. Some of the angling and hunting resources in the region are of international or national importance.
11. Decisions affecting sports fish and game bird habitat management are often made by external agencies. Eastern Fish and Game Council needs to ensure that other agencies are fulfilling statutory obligations with respect to their habitat protection responsibilities.
12. The Resource Management Act 1991 provides an opportunity for Council to advocate for sports fish and game bird habitat and angling and hunting values.
13. The wide diversity of sports fish and game bird habitat in the region provides a range of angling and hunting opportunities.
14. Natural character, amenity, wilderness values, and access values are a significant part of the angling and hunting experience. It is important that these values are not degraded by development proposals.
15. Protection of freshwater habitats requires a range of water management techniques.
16. Low public awareness of the importance of many ecosystems and habitats, or the degraded state of some of these.
17. The ongoing effects of climate change on sports fish and game bird habitats.
18. Threats from the spread of pest plants and organisms such as Didymo.
19. Lack of knowledge about the long term impacts of habitat change or manipulation.

2.1.2 OBJECTIVE

Advocacy for sports fish and game bird habitat values, angling, and hunting values using statutory and non-statutory processes.

POLICIES

2.1.2(a) To encourage other statutory authorities to make provision for the goals and objectives contained in the Eastern Fish and Game Council Sports Fish and Game Management Plan.

2.1.2(b) To use statutory planning processes and mechanisms to promote the maintenance, protection, and enhancement of sports fish and game bird habitats at local, regional, and national levels. Eastern Fish and Game Council involvement in statutory planning should take the following into account:

- Significance of the sports fish or game bird habitat values.
- Significance of the angling or hunting values involved.
- Vulnerability of the resource to the adverse effects of human use and development.
- Degree of protection sought by the Council.
- The scale of proposals, the significance of effects of proposals, and the degree of uncertainty of effects on sports fish and game habitats or angling and hunting values.
- Conditions included by applicants to avoid, remedy, or mitigate adverse effects on sports fish or game habitats or recreational values.

Appendix 1 is attached for information purposes. It lists significant sports fish and game bird habitats in the Eastern Fish and Game Region and is not exhaustive. The significance of habitats not listed in Appendix 1, or the significance of their angling or hunting values, will be determined by assessing:

- Level of angler or hunter use, as determined by surveys or angler/hunter use data obtained by the Council.
- Wilderness values, including remoteness, solitude.
- Natural character values.
- Spawning habitat values.
- Game bird feeding, loafing, or breeding values.
- Ecological values.
- Whether the site or water body is important locally, regionally, or nationally .
- Whether there are other similar representative areas in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

2.1.2(c) To seek, through the Resource Management Act 1991, provisions in plans for:

- Protection and enhancement of wetlands.
- Rules on land and water use that maintain or enhance aquatic ecosystems.
- Angler and hunter access.
- Maintenance and enhancement of riparian margins.
- Catchment protection.

- Other provisions that will benefit sports fish or game bird habitats or recreational values.
- Protection and enhancement of the sports fish or game bird resource as determined by the criteria in (b) above, or of those listed in Appendix 1.

2.1.2(d) To proactively advocate Fish & Game New Zealand interests to statutory authorities to promote protection and enhancement of sports fish and game bird habitats. This also involves participating in non-statutory processes such as Action Plans and collaborative processes to advocate for sports fish and game bird habitats, and angling and hunting values.

2.1.2(e) To promote the development of national environmental and planning standards and legislation which provides for the maintenance, protection, and enhancement of values associated with angling and hunting and sports fish and game bird habitats.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Use of formal processes to provide for and recognise Fish & Game New Zealand interests in appropriate statutory planning matters.

Involvement by the Eastern Fish and Game Council in all aspects of the resource consent process, including consultation, submissions, pre-hearing, hearing, and appeal processes. The Council will advocate for decisions and conditions that promote sports fish and game bird interests and the interests of anglers and hunters.

To seek solutions in terms of remediation or mitigation where adverse effects of activities on sports fish and game habitats or recreational values cannot be avoided.

Regular liaison with regional and district councils.

Participation in non-statutory and collaborative processes and advocating for outcomes that uphold the interests of anglers and hunters.

Assistance in the development of national planning standards and fish and game advocacy to Ministry for the Environment and other national organisations.

Promotion of good riparian management practices, wetland enhancement, catchment protection, and fish and game habitat enhancement initiatives to regional and territorial authorities, the Department of Conservation, land managers and Iwi.

Development of effective protocols with other resource management authorities for managing key environmental impacts.

2.1.3 OBJECTIVE

Protection, maintenance, and enhancement of sports fish and game bird habitats.

POLICIES

2.1.3(a) To increase community awareness of the importance of good sports fish and game bird habitat management practices.

2.1.3(b) To coordinate with land managers, Iwi, and statutory authorities to promote the protection and enhancement of sports fish and game bird habitats.

2.1.3(c) To consider opportunities to purchase or manage land for sports fish and game bird habitat protection or enhancement purposes. The following criteria will be considered:

- Review the effectiveness of current ownership or management agreements.
- Benefits should outweigh costs where property is retained under Eastern Fish and Game Council control.
- That the area meets the criteria in policy 2.1.2(b).
- Where purchase is considered, purchase should be the most cost-effective means of achieving protection.

2.1.3(d) To promote the establishment of covenants in order to protect sports fish and game bird habitats and recreational values.

2.1.3(e) To provide advice and assistance to landowners in relation to management, enhancement, or creation of sports fish or game bird habitats on private land.

2.1.3(f) To pursue funding for sports fish and game bird habitat enhancement work and for raising awareness of the benefits of habitat protection.

2.1.3(g) To carry out sports fish and game bird habitat maintenance and enhancement works where appropriate.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Provision of advice and assistance to landowners to establish covenants and on habitat matters.

Applications for funding for habitat enhancement projects.

Provision of information and advice to land managers regarding management, enhancement, and creation of fish and game habitats.

Publication of habitat information through various forms of communication.

Liaison and cooperation with other land management agencies, land managers, and environmental interest groups where appropriate.

Provision of financial or physical assistance for appropriate habitat maintenance and enhancement works.

Development of best management practices for habitat maintenance and enhancement works that are carried out by or supported by Eastern Fish and Game Council.

Support for appropriate angler and hunter initiated habitat maintenance and enhancement works.

2.2 FISH AND GAME MANAGED RESERVES AND PROPERTIES

BACKGROUND

Eastern Fish and Game Council has management responsibilities for a number of Wildlife Management Reserves and properties in the Eastern Fish and Game Region. These locations are listed in Appendix 2. Some of these areas were donated to the Crown by former acclimatisation societies, angler/hunter groups, and individuals. While the Department of Conservation generally administers the underlying Crown land classification, on many of these properties the Eastern Fish and Game Council has been appointed to control or manage all or part of the reserves, has the reserves vested in them, or operates under a Management Agreement.

These reserves and properties provide significant game bird habitat within the region. Many of these areas also have significant indigenous flora and fauna values, cultural values, and other natural resource values. It is important that habitat values are maximised, and that they are managed for the purpose for which they were established. Management agreements have been put in place for some of these areas where management is in conjunction with other agencies. Statutory management plans may be prepared for reserves under the Reserves Act 1977 where the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan is lacking. Such plans, and future agreements and guidelines, would consider recreational use, access, flora and fauna, and the interests of other users of the land.

As the Department of Conservation has joint administration or management responsibilities for many of the properties, it is important that Council maintains consultation with the Department on matters concerning them. Such matters include water level management, weed control, and vegetation removal.

It is possible that other areas of public or private land may become available to Eastern Fish and Game Council in the future, or that opportunities to manage areas may arise. The Council needs to recognise and take advantage of these opportunities as they arise. Council will review existing ownership and management agreements, and assess the benefits of further ownership or management of public or private land before making such decisions.

2.2.1 ISSUES

1. Management of reserves and properties is often in conjunction with other agencies, particularly the Department of Conservation and Iwi. At times the various agencies may have different management aspirations for reserves and properties.
2. Management agreements, guidelines, or plans may be required to direct the future management of reserves and properties.
3. Opportunities to manage or purchase additional areas of public or private land may become available to the Eastern Fish and Game Council.
4. At present there are no formal Best Management Practices in place for reserve maintenance and enhancement activities for some reserves and properties.

5. Some of these areas have been identified for future Treaty of Waitangi settlements.
6. These areas are often also used by people other than hunters.
7. Land use upstream and around reserves and properties means that water availability is becoming an increasing issue. Adjoining land uses, such as subdivision, can also adversely affect habitat values, management, or the ability for hunters to use them.
8. The ongoing maintenance of reserves and properties is a significant cost to Eastern Fish and Game Council.
9. Pest plants and animals are an ongoing issue in reserves and properties.

2.2.2 OBJECTIVE

Maintenance and enhancement of sports fish and/or game bird habitats and recreational values in reserves and properties owned or managed by Eastern Fish and Game Council.

POLICIES

2.2.2(a) To manage Wildlife Management Reserves and properties in accordance with their statutory purpose and relevant management agreements or guidelines.

2.2.2(b) To develop strategies for coordinating the purchase or obtaining management authority of future habitats, and for on-going maintenance, development, and management of reserves and properties owned or managed by Eastern Fish and Game Council.

2.2.2(c) To obtain regulatory authority for issuing of access permits, including long term tenancy, to enter lands administered by the Department of Conservation where game bird hunting is appropriate.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Consultation with the Department of Conservation, Iwi, stakeholders and licence holders regarding management options for Crown owned Wildlife Management Reserves vested in or managed by Eastern Fish and Game Council.

Formulation of management agreements or plans where Eastern Fish and Game Council has joint ownership or management of land.

Consideration of the potential effects of management agreements, guidelines, or plans on other natural resources and other users of the environment.

Development of Best Management Practices in association with other agencies for reserve maintenance or enhancement works.

Appropriate works to maintain and enhance sports fish and game bird habitats in reserves.

2.3 INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

BACKGROUND

Input to statutory processes and appropriate proactive habitat management is reliant on a base of information that documents available habitats in the Eastern Fish and Game Region. Such information is essential for effective submissions to planning documents at all levels, and for the identification of areas that are deficient in particular types of habitat. On-going development of baseline inventories of resources and monitoring of trends and habitat loss is an essential aspect of habitat management.

2.3.1 ISSUES

1. Effective statutory advocacy cannot be carried out without baseline information on the status of sports fish and game bird habitats in the region.
2. Eastern Fish and Game Council often collects habitat information that is useful to other agencies and vice versa.
3. Some agencies are failing in their statutory responsibilities to collect habitat information that could be useful to Eastern Fish and Game Council.

2.3.2 OBJECTIVE

Development of appropriate databases of fish and game habitats in the Eastern Fish and Game Region to facilitate effective habitat management in conjunction with other agencies.

POLICIES

2.3.2(a) To develop and maintain inventories of fish and game habitats in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Maintenance of inventories that detail the condition and trends of ecosystems as habitat for sports fish and game birds.

Integration of databases with other regional and national resource management databases.

Identification of areas deficient in wetland, upland game, and sports fish spawning habitat in the region.

2.4 ANGLER AND HUNTER IMPACTS

BACKGROUND

Angler and hunter activities, such as poor maimai construction, use and maintenance, or failure to remove rubbish, may have adverse effects on the environment or other users of natural resources. Failure to remove undesirable aquatic weeds, organisms or pest fish species from boats or equipment may result in transfer of these species between waterways. The Eastern Fish

and Game Council has a role to educate anglers and hunters to minimise the impacts their recreational activities may have on the environment.

Dogs are a vital part of game bird hunting, but in some cases are prohibited, or proposals to prohibit them arise, from areas where hunting takes place. Eastern Fish and Game Council will advocate for dog access in those areas where there will be minimal adverse effects on flora and fauna or other users.

Eastern Fish and Game Council carries out habitat maintenance and enhancement activities that may have adverse effects on natural resources and other users of the environment. The Council is committed to ensuring that adverse effects of these activities are avoided, remedied, or mitigated.

2.4.1 ISSUES

1. Some angler and hunter activities may have adverse effects on the environment or other users of natural resources.
2. Dog use is restricted on some lands managed by the Department of Conservation or District Councils.
3. Eastern Fish and Game Council activities may have adverse effects on the environment or other users of natural resources.
4. Fish & Game New Zealand needs to promote the responsible use of the environment by hunters and anglers.
5. Urban encroachment and development means that reverse sensitivity is becoming an increasing issue, particularly for hunting activities.

2.4.2 OBJECTIVE

Minimise adverse impacts on the environment from Eastern Fish and Game Council or licence holder activities.

POLICIES

2.4.2(a) To provide input to Fish & Game New Zealand on issues associated with the impacts of angling and hunting on the environment.

2.4.2(b) To encourage anglers and hunters to minimise their impacts on the environment and on other users of natural resources.

2.4.2(c) To provide a code of practice for responsible behaviour for licence holders. Responsible behaviour includes checking for, and removal or destruction of, undesirable fish and aquatic weeds from boats and equipment. A good example of this is the ‘check, clean, dry’ campaign in response to the threat of didymo incursion and transferring aquatic pests.

2.4.2(d) To support other agencies in restricting the spread of pest species such as aquatic weeds, didymo, or pest fish where their presence will have an adverse effect on sports fish or game interests.

2.4.2(e) To advocate for dog access in areas where there will be minimal adverse effects on the environment or other users.

2.4.2(f) To consider other natural resources and other users of the environment where Council activities may have an adverse impact on the environment or its users.

2.4.2(g) To meet all legal requirements relating to habitat maintenance and enhancement projects.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Application for resource consents where required.

Development of guidelines and/or methods for planting of appropriate species, weed management, and vegetation removal for habitat maintenance and enhancement projects.

Consultation with affected parties and with other agencies regarding angler or hunter impacts.

Development of guidelines for construction, maintenance, and management of structures associated with angling and hunting.

Development of guidelines and advocacy for responsible angler and hunter behaviour.

3. ANGLER AND HUNTER PARTICIPATION

INTRODUCTION

The Conservation Act 1987 provides for Fish and Game Councils to manage, maintain, and enhance the sports fish and game resource in the recreational interests of anglers and hunters. The Eastern Fish and Game Council also has a statutory responsibility to keep anglers and hunters informed on matters affecting their interests.²⁴ As licence sales make up Fish & Game New Zealand's revenue base, it is in the Eastern Fish and Game Council's interests to encourage potential anglers and hunters to take up angling and hunting as recreational activities. It is equally important that current anglers and hunters enjoy these activities, and that factors that may limit participation are minimised. At the same time, the Council must ensure that increased use of the sports fish and game resource does not compromise their sustainability or the quality of the experience.

The long term viability of Fish & Game New Zealand is dependent on maximising opportunities for wide public participation in angling and hunting. In order that anglers and hunters do not view the purchase of a licence as merely a legal requirement or a tax, the Eastern Fish and Game Council aims to promote licences as value added products. Licence holders purchase the opportunity to fish and hunt. Fish & Game New Zealand provides them with the ability to realise this opportunity through a range of products and services.

Guidance, assistance, and on-going satisfaction for licence holders is part of ensuring continued participation and satisfaction in sports fish angling and game bird hunting. In recent years the Eastern Fish and Game Council has been committed to promoting all aspects of angling and hunting, the sale of licences, and communicating with licence holders to access the sports fish and game opportunities in the region.

Goal 3: To maximise angler and hunter participation while maintaining and improving the quality and diversity of the recreational experience.

3.1 ACCESS

BACKGROUND

The availability of access to sports fishing and game bird hunting has been identified as a significant factor limiting participation. Maintenance and enhancement of access opportunities to the Eastern Fish and Game Region's sports fish and game resource is a key responsibility for Eastern Fish and Game Council. The Conservation Act 1987 states that Fish and Game Councils should:

²⁴ Conservation Act 1987, s 26Q(1).

*“maintain and improve the sports fish and game resource...by maintaining and improving access”.*²⁵

Legal access to New Zealand’s rivers, lakes, coastline, and their margins is something valued by sports fish anglers and game bird hunters. The ability to gain access to these areas is a fundamental part of fishing and hunting. Restrictions on access to water bodies, wetlands, or upland game habitat may result in the ‘exclusive capture’ of rights to sports fish and game populations. While we can control or facilitate access on land managed by Fish and Game Councils or public lands, much of the sports fish and game resource is either on private land or in areas only accessible across private land. The problem of ‘exclusive capture’ of fishing and hunting opportunities through restricted or paid access across private property is an increasing threat affecting the public resource of sports fish and game birds. It is therefore important to continue efforts towards maintaining and improving access across private land. The Eastern Fish and Game Council can seek access provisions through statutory processes, or through negotiations with land owners. The Government has also established the Walking Access Commission to enhance the free, certain, enduring and practical public walking access to the outdoors. This Commission has produced intensive mapping systems for public land and now has ongoing work resolving access issues to important public resources.

Physical access to angling and hunting areas is not currently possible in some parts of the Eastern Fish and Game Region. Dense riparian vegetation may reduce fishing opportunities, and tracks may be non-existent, over-grown, or in poor condition. The Eastern Fish and Game Council has targeted intensively fished and hunted areas for improvements to physical access.

While legal and physical access to water and land for angling and hunting are issues to be addressed, it is important that licence holders are aware of the opportunities available. Anglers and hunters need to be informed of the areas open to them, how to reach these areas, and where public access points are located. Signposting of significant angling and hunting access points enable licence holders to easily identify opportunities. In conjunction with national brand initiatives, access signs also promote public awareness of Fish and Game Councils and the Fish & Game New Zealand brand.

3.1.1 ISSUES

1. Access to sports fish and game bird hunting opportunities is a significant factor limiting participation.
2. Much of the sports fish and game bird resource is on private land, or only accessible by crossing private land.
3. Restricted or preferential access arrangements across private land can result in ‘exclusive capture’ of fishing and hunting and reduces overall opportunities to licence holders.
4. Statutory processes can be used to provide legal access, or the Eastern Fish and Game Council can negotiate with landowners.

²⁵ Conservation Act 1987, s 26Q(l).

5. Where legal access is available, physical access may be impeded by vegetation or lack of tracks.
6. Licence holders may not be aware of access points to angling or hunting opportunities.
7. Undesirable angler or hunter behaviour may lead to access restrictions.²⁶
8. Financial reward for access is becoming more common. This is often in the form of charges for 'track maintenance' or similar.
9. The Walking Access Commission has been created to facilitate free, practical and enduring walking access and regional access restrictions have yet to be tested.
10. Treaty of Waitangi settlements can result in changes to access provisions to Crown Forest lands that have previously been available for public access.

3.1.2 OBJECTIVE

Maintenance and improvement of public access to a wide range of sports fishing and game bird hunting opportunities within the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

POLICIES

3.1.2(a) To advocate and negotiate for the protection and creation of access rights on public and private lands to and along rivers, lakes, and wetlands and to upland game hunting areas.

3.1.2(b) To facilitate the maintenance and improvement of physical access to key sports fish angling and game bird hunting areas.

3.1.2(c) To inform anglers and hunters of access opportunities, including access rights and locations.

3.1.2(d) To educate hunters and anglers and encourage responsible behaviour on private and public land.

3.1.2(e) To be proactive and involved in Treaty of Waitangi settlement processes.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Submissions to relevant statutory processes to maintain and improve access.

Negotiation and liaison with district and regional authorities, Department of Conservation, Walking Access Commission, landowners, Iwi, Office of Treaty Settlements, and other appropriate parties to maintain and improve access opportunities.

Promotion of public awareness and formation of links with other recreational groups in relation to protection of access rights.

²⁶ Discussed in Section 2.4 – Angler and Hunter Impacts, supra at 39.

Facilitation and coordination of physical works to maintain and improve access tracks to or along key angling and hunting areas.

Provision and maintenance of Fish & Game New Zealand signs at appropriate access points to hunting and fishing areas.

Development and maintenance of inventories of public access points throughout the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

Provision of a range of associated services that assist licence holders to gain access to angling and hunting opportunities, including publication of pamphlets and access information.

Promotion of responsible angler and hunter behaviour.

3.2 INCREASED PARTICIPATION AND SATISFACTION

BACKGROUND

Increasing competition for the public's recreational time and money mean that the Eastern Fish and Game Council must ensure that licence holders are satisfied with both the experiences they obtain and the services that are provided to assist them. A range of services are provided to anglers and hunters, both to encourage participation, and to assist them in enjoying the sports fish and game resource. Increased participation may be through new anglers and hunters or the return of lapsed participants. Encouraging young anglers and hunters is one area that the Council should focus on. A relatively low number of females currently fish or hunt. If it were possible to overcome the low participation of women, Fish & Game New Zealand would have access to a far larger target audience.

Training for youth/novice anglers and hunters, allocation of balloted hunting stands on Council managed reserves and properties, and legislative control of fishing competitions are some of the services that the Eastern Fish and Game Council provides to encourage participation and achieve licence holder satisfaction.

Eastern Fish and Game Council can continue to assist anglers and hunters to access and enjoy the sports fish and game resource in the region through provision of information services, for example pamphlets and internet services. The angling and hunting information service is an important component of the Council's annual work programme. It is structured to inform licence holders of angling and hunting opportunities, as well as providing regular updated information. Direct communications with licence holders enable the Council to inform anglers and hunters of changes to regulations, topical issues, work projects, and progress with initiatives.

Guides are an important aspect of angling and hunting in the Eastern Fish and Game Region, and play a role in ensuring that anglers and hunters enjoy a quality experience. As there is a high number of visitors to the region, guides are able to provide local knowledge of the area and facilitate access to the fish and game resource for these visitors. Guides are also able to introduce new participants to sports fishing and hunting, through the provision of information and a quality experience for novice anglers and hunters. Upland Game Hunting Properties also encourage participation through offering guided services for released birds. The Council sets

criteria for their operation and in turn registers them as properties with special conditions in the annual Game Season conditions.

The Eastern Fish and Game Region is the only Fish and Game region where two separate licences must be purchased to fish. This is because the Taupo Fishing District lies inside the regions boundaries and is separately managed by the Department of Conservation. Eastern Fish and Game Council consider that this is a barrier to licence holders being able to access the full range of angling opportunities. Inclusion of the Taupo fishery into the nationally inter-available licence may increase opportunities and the value of the licence to all anglers.

To improve participation levels, it is essential that Fish & Game New Zealand is able to provide anglers and hunters with an enjoyable experience. It is therefore necessary to determine what anglers and hunters are seeking and whether there is a high level of licence holder satisfaction.

3.2.1 ISSUES

1. There is increasing competition for recreational time and money.
2. Youth/novice anglers and hunters are an important market, and may need assistance to learn about fishing and hunting.
3. There are relatively low numbers of female anglers and hunters.
4. Fishing and hunting guides, fishing competitions, balloted hunting stands, and organised events are ways in which Eastern Fish and Game Council can assist and encourage participation.
5. Anglers and hunters may not be aware of all of the angling and hunting opportunities in the Eastern Fish and Game Region, or how to access them. The provision of regular up to date information on the sports fish and game bird resource and the recreational opportunities available would help to ensure licence holders are informed.
6. Licences have been traditionally viewed as a legal requirement, rather than a value added product.
7. Fish & Game New Zealand needs to be aware of the types of experience that anglers and hunters are seeking in order to try to provide these opportunities for them.
8. Anglers are not able to fish in the Taupo Fishing District with a Fish and Game fishing licence.

3.2.2 OBJECTIVE

Maximise participation in angling and hunting, and improved licence holder satisfaction.

POLICIES

3.2.2(a) To communicate with licence holders in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

3.2.2(b) To increase the value of fishing and hunting licences and improve customer services.

3.2.2(c) To provide training opportunities for youth and novice anglers and hunters to participate in sports fishing and game bird hunting.

3.2.2(d) To review permits for appropriate fishing competitions, and to support appropriate participation based competitions.

3.2.2(e) To manage ballot tenure in reserves and properties managed by the Eastern Fish and Game Council.

3.2.2(f) To encourage participation in appropriate game bird hunting and sports fishing events.

3.2.2(g) To recognise the role of angling and hunting guides, and Upland Game Hunting Properties in providing opportunities for licence holders.

3.2.2(h) To assess angler and hunter satisfaction levels to determine what services and opportunities anglers and hunters are seeking.

3.2.2(i) To advocate for the future inclusion of the Taupo fishery within the Fish and Game licencing system.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Identification and implementation of ways to provide additional services and opportunities to licence holders.

Supporting children's fishing programmes, and providing novice angler and hunter education.

Consideration of fishing competition applications, dependent on the potential impacts on the sustainability of the resource.

Allocation of ballots for hunting stands in reserves and properties managed by Eastern Fish and Game Council.

Publication of pamphlets, fishing reports, newsletters, magazine supplements, and media information.

Communication with angling and hunting clubs and attendance at club meetings.

Maintenance of communications with angling and hunting guides.

Angler and hunter satisfaction surveys and monitoring of participation.

3.3 SOCIAL IMPACTS²⁷

BACKGROUND

Social impacts on the angling and hunting experience are an issue that is becoming an increasing concern to Fish & Game New Zealand. The experience associated with fishing or hunting in some areas, particularly wilderness fisheries, may be adversely affected by the growing numbers of anglers or hunters visiting them. Values such as solitude, remoteness, and wilderness may be reduced through higher angler and hunter pressures. In some cases the wilderness values that licence holders are seeking are being diminished by recreational use. Game bird hunting, particularly in balloted areas and public water areas, appears to be subject to the same pressures.

In order to maintain the quality of the angling and hunting experience, some control of effort in some locations may be required. Management of social impacts will become even more important as increased growth in the tourism industry occurs. Control of social impacts on resources involves managing social interactions between anglers or hunters, rather than management of the biological resource. While some of the management options may limit the ability of anglers and hunters to access opportunities, the Eastern Fish and Game Council needs to take a proactive position on the issue if the quality of angling and hunting experiences are to be maintained.

3.3.1 ISSUES

1. Values such as remoteness, solitude, or wilderness, associated with many angling and hunting experiences, may be adversely affected by growing numbers of anglers and hunters visiting certain areas.
2. There may be too many anglers in some wilderness fishing areas, or too many hunters shooting in some areas.
3. The behaviour of some licence holders can adversely affect the satisfaction of other anglers and hunters using the resource.

3.3.2 OBJECTIVE

Management of social impacts of anglers and hunters in a manner that maintains and improves the quality of angling and hunting experiences.

POLICIES

3.3.2(a) To identify pressure sensitive fisheries and hunting areas where social impacts may be a problem, and to evaluate their social carrying capacities.

3.3.2(b) To seek to establish control mechanisms for access to and use of pressure sensitive fisheries and hunting areas.

²⁷ This section discusses social impacts in terms of high angling or hunting pressure having negative effects on angling or hunting experiences. Issues relating to angler or hunter impacts on other users of the environment are discussed in Section 2.4, supra at 39.

3.3.2(c) To educate licence holders and encourage responsible and appropriate behaviour when angling or hunting.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Consideration of a range of approaches to angler and hunter management.

Undertake creel and satisfaction surveys and monitoring of key fisheries and hunting areas.

Liaison with New Zealand and regional Fish and Game Councils and their staff, Department of Conservation where social impacts are of mutual interest, and communicate with organisations in New Zealand and overseas with similar issues.

To promote and monitor responsible and appropriate behaviour when angling or hunting.

4. PUBLIC AWARENESS

INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Fish and Game Council is responsible for management of the sports fish and game bird resource in the Eastern Fish and Game Region. This management responsibility involves relationships with many other stakeholder groups; for example statutory organisations, Iwi, interest groups, and the wider community. The level of support for the organisation impacts upon the Council's capacity to successfully achieve its purposes and functions. To function effectively, the Council requires high public awareness of its role and activities, and the contribution it makes to environmental enhancement, and an acceptability of Fish & Game New Zealand activities.

Fish & Game New Zealand periodically surveys how aware the New Zealand public is of the organisation and the activities it carries out. The level of public awareness of the organisation has increased considerably over recent years from only 55% of all New Zealanders being aware of Fish & Game New Zealand in 1996 surveys to 92% on 2011 surveys²⁸. There has been an active programme to present Fish & Game New Zealand as the 'champion' for wider public issues such as water quality and public access; however there is still a relatively low public awareness of what the organisation actually does beyond enforcing angling and hunting regulations.

Goal 4: To maximise public awareness of the opportunities, values and issues associated with the sports fish and game resource, and support for the management role of Fish and Game Councils.

4.1 PUBLIC ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION

BACKGROUND

A decreasing proportion of New Zealanders participate in angling and hunting. Factors such as urbanisation, changing social values and increasing diversity of recreational opportunities have all contributed to this change. The Eastern Fish and Game Council needs to ensure that the recreational pursuits of angling and hunting continue to be viewed as worthwhile and socially acceptable recreational activities. Fish & Game New Zealand and licence holders are significant contributors to habitat protection and conservation initiatives. Many of these projects benefit a wide range of species and user groups. Increased promotion of the conservation role of Fish and Game Councils and anglers and hunters is one of many ways to improve public awareness of Fish & Game New Zealand's activities.

²⁸ Nielson 2011. *Fish & Game NZ Public Awareness Report, November 2011*

One of the most positive aspects of angling and hunting is that they provide the incentive for the community to participate in an outdoor activity. The benefits, enjoyment, and satisfaction gained from outdoor recreation needs to be promoted. The Eastern Fish and Game Council has a unique resource available to it, in terms of the Ngongotaha site and hatchery complex. These assets provide an ideal opportunity for use as educational facilities. Education of the general public, particularly school groups, further increases community understanding of the fish and game resource and Fish & Game New Zealand's role in managing it. Group visits to the hatchery and presentations to groups enable community members to gain firsthand experience of some of the processes involved in sports fish and game management.

4.1.1 ISSUES

1. There is insufficient public awareness of Fish & Game New Zealand's role in sports fish and game management, conservation work, and environmental enhancement.
2. Proportionally fewer people are participating in angling and hunting.
3. Angling and hunting are becoming less socially acceptable with the wider public as recreational activities than in the past.
4. Many physical, social, and educational benefits of angling and hunting are not widely recognised.
5. There are many opportunities to educate the general public, particularly schools, about the conservation and environmental advocacy carried out by Fish & Game New Zealand.
6. The Ngongotaha site and hatchery complex provide opportunities for use as educational facilities.

4.1.2 OBJECTIVE

Promotion of the role of the Eastern Fish and Game Council and its contribution to conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

POLICIES

- 4.1.2(a)** To expand an education programme that promotes the wider ecological benefits resulting from protection and enhancement of sports fish and game bird habitats, and the wider benefits of angling and hunting.
- 4.1.2(b)** To cooperate with development and delivery of national public awareness programmes.
- 4.1.2(c)** To promote a professional image in the operation of Fish & Game New Zealand.
- 4.1.2(d)** To advocate for Fish & Game New Zealand interests through the media.
- 4.1.2(e)** To participate in relevant promotional opportunities, including appropriate promotions with other organisations with mutual goals or interests.

4.1.2(f) To identify opportunities, and respond positively to appropriate requests, to address members of the public on sports fish and game matters.

4.1.2(g) To continue utilising new technology such as the internet to promote Fish & Game New Zealand.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Expand the information and display areas at the Ngongotaha site to cater for angling, hunting, and conservation education projects.

Facilitation of educational visits to the hatchery complex and public open days.

Presentations at schools.

Consultation with the wider community to gain an understanding of the areas where the Eastern Fish and Game Council may contribute to conservation or sustainable resource management initiatives.

Use of education kits and publicity material compiled and distributed in conjunction with New Zealand Fish and Game Council and in line with the New Zealand Environmental Education Strategy.

Maintenance of effective media communications and relationships.

Positive response to adverse public criticisms of angling and hunting where appropriate.

Support and promotion of the Fish & Game New Zealand brand.

Representation at appropriate public events.

Positive response to requests from outside parties to cooperate on appropriate projects.

Demonstrations of, and community involvement in, habitat enhancement projects where appropriate.

Public participation in Fish & Game New Zealand activities where appropriate.

Utilising new technology and media to communicate efficiently and effectively with the public.

4.2 STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

BACKGROUND

Fish & Game New Zealand interacts with a wide range of both statutory and non statutory organisations. Some organisations have aligning goals while others have opposing goals, and some have both, depending on the issues being considered. Conversely, some Fish and Game Council operations may have the potential to impact on other users of natural resources. Where possible, it is in the Eastern Fish and Game Council's best interests to work together with these

organisations. Regular liaison and communications are an effective way of ensuring that issues affecting sports fish and game or recreational values are addressed.

Eastern Fish and Game Council works closely with the Department of Conservation on resource management issues, habitat enhancement, reserves management, and other areas where our responsibilities coincide. A number of co-management agreements exist for regional wetlands and at the national level a Memorandum of Understanding exists between New Zealand Fish and Game Council and the Department of Conservation to guide continuing professional relationships between the two organisations.

4.2.1 ISSUES

1. The functions and goals of other organisations may affect the interests of Fish & Game New Zealand and vice versa.
2. A lack of consultation between stakeholder groups can result in unresolved conflicts.
3. There is a lack of understanding about the role of Fish & Game New Zealand amongst some stakeholder groups.

4.2.2 OBJECTIVE

Maintain positive relationships between Eastern Fish and Game Council and key stakeholder groups.

POLICIES

4.2.2(a) To liaise with key stakeholder groups where appropriate.

4.2.2(b) To seek opportunities to increase public awareness of sports fish and game interests within other groups.

4.2.2(c) To share information and work together on common interests and issues with other organisations and groups where appropriate.

4.2.2(d) To consult with the Department of Conservation on matters that affect the Department's responsibilities and interests.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Attendance at meetings as appropriate.

Regular communications and liaison with resource management, interest, and Iwi groups.

Coordination of joint advocacy initiatives on matters of common interest and where benefits will accrue to the Eastern Fish and Game Council.

Support for those public awareness programmes of other agencies that involve Council interests.

Inclusion of articles promoting sports fish and game values in the publications of other organisations.

Regular communications with Department of Conservation staff and Conservation Boards.

4.3 TANGATA WHENUA

BACKGROUND

The Eastern Fish and Game Region overlaps the rohe of a number of Iwi authorities. These include Te Arawa and Ngati Tuwharetoa in the Rotorua lakes and Taupo areas, Ngati Whare, Ngati Manawa and Ngati Awa in the central areas, Tuhoë, Whakatohea, Te Whanau a Apanui, Ngati Porou and Kahungunu in Te Urewera and the eastern areas, Raukawa, Ngai Te Rangi and Ngati Ranginui in the western areas, and Rongowhakaata, Te Aitanga a Mahaki, and Ngai Tamanihuri in the Gisborne/Wairoa area of the region.²⁹

Some of these Iwi authorities have settled Treaty of Waitangi claims with the Crown while others are at various stages of moving towards settlement. During the process to reach settlements Eastern Fish and Game Council has had varying levels of engagement with both Iwi and the Crown and it has become increasingly important to actively become involved in relationship building and effectively communicating with both parties to ensure the interests of licence holders are represented.

The Tangata whenua of the region have strong ties with the land and water resources, and are increasingly involved in resource management issues. Tangata whenua share many common values with Fish & Game New Zealand with respect to sustainable management of natural resources, sustainable harvest of resources, and habitat maintenance and enhancement. The Eastern Fish and Game Council considers that it is beneficial to both parties to meet collectively on matters of common interest or concern. There are instances where Iwi knowledge may be beneficial for Council. Likewise, Council may be able to provide assistance to Tangata whenua on sports fish and game bird matters or resource management planning processes.

CONSERVATION ACT 1987, SECTION 4 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Treaty of Waitangi establishes a partnership between the Crown and Iwi. In most of New Zealand the sports fish and game bird resource is managed on behalf of the Crown by regional Fish and Game Councils.

The Conservation Act 1987 states that:

*“this Act shall be so interpreted and administered as to give effects to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi”.*³⁰

The Act places a statutory responsibility on the Eastern Fish and Game Council to act in accordance with these principles unless they are clearly inconsistent with legislation.³¹ It is very important to the Council that a co-operative working relationship with Iwi is developed and

²⁹ Refer maps in Appendix 3 - Iwi Rohe (Tribal Areas) Overlapping the Eastern Fish and Game Region, supra at 107. Another useful source for accessing up to date information on the rohe and contact details of Iwi authorities is via the Te Kahui Mangai website.

³⁰ Conservation Act 1987, s 4.

³¹ *Ngai Tahu Maori Trust Board v Director-General of Conservation* [1995] 3 NZLR 553.

maintained. The Council has already worked beneficially with various Iwi in the Eastern Fish and Game Region and recognises that the Treaty encourages partners to afford each other reasonable cooperation and to act towards each other with the utmost good faith. Engagement between the Eastern Fish and Game Council and Iwi has occurred on matters of common interest and the Council is committed to continuing effective collaboration with Iwi partners across the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

4.3.1 ISSUES

1. The Treaty of Waitangi establishes a partnership between the Crown and Maori. The sports fish and game bird resource is managed on behalf of the Crown by Fish and Game Councils.
2. The Eastern Fish and Game Council has a number of interests in common with Tangata whenua, for example, sustainable management of natural resources, sustainable harvest of resources, access to resources and habitat maintenance and enhancement.
3. The Treaty Settlement process can affect the sports fish and game bird resource, habitats and access to previously crown owned lands. Eastern Fish and Game Council needs to be involved in Settlement processes from an early stage.

4.3.2 OBJECTIVE

Development of positive relationships between Eastern Fish and Game Council and Iwi in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

POLICIES

- 4.3.2(a)** To identify opportunities to work together on areas of common interest.
- 4.3.2(b)** To engage with Iwi on sports fish and game issues that may affect their interests.
- 4.3.2(c)** To actively advance relationships with Iwi across the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Recognition of Iwi interests in resource management issues.

Regard for how management activities may affect Maori values on lands managed by Eastern Fish and Game Council.

Facilitation of appropriate avenues for engagement between the Eastern Fish and Game Council and Iwi, for example by creating formal Memorandums of Understanding.

Engagement and involvement of Tangata whenua in relevant public awareness activities.

To liaise proactively with Iwi authorities on an ongoing basis.

5. COMPLIANCE

INTRODUCTION

New Zealand Fish and Game Council has a statutory responsibility to recommend fishing and hunting regulations³² for licence holders.³³ The Eastern Fish and Game Council is also obliged to ensure that the regulations are enforced. The Conservation Act 1987 requires Fish and Game Councils to:

Maintain and improve the sports fishing and hunting resource...

*iv) by ensuring that there are sufficient resources to enforce fish and game regulations.*³⁴

Goal 5: To protect the sports fish and game resource and its users through education and effective enforcement of legislative requirements.

5.1 ENFORCEMENT OF REGULATIONS

BACKGROUND

Offences range from poaching activities, to failure to purchase a licence, to non-compliance with fishing and hunting regulations. Enforcement is necessary for two main reasons. It is important to ensure that all anglers and hunters purchase a licence, thereby contributing to the costs of fish and game management. Secondly, illegal poaching activities and non-compliance with regulations such as bag limits may compromise the sustainable management of the sports fish and game resource.

The Eastern Fish and Game Region includes a number of intensively fished areas like the Rotorua lakes. Maintenance of law enforcement in high-use areas is important to ensure that Fish & Game New Zealand's licence base is not threatened. While other parts of the region might have less pressure, in these instances the sustainability of biological resources may be of concern. Poaching activities on significant spawning streams, in particular, may threaten the sustainability of biological resources. Illegal shooting of game birds at game bird moult sites may also threaten local populations of species such as paradise shelduck.

³² “Regulations” refers to rules and conditions for sports fish angling and game bird hunting. New Zealand Fish and Game Council recommends conditions to the Minister of Conservation, as advertised in the game season Gazette and the Anglers Notice. The term “regulations” has been used to encapsulate all relevant rules and conditions.

³³ Objectives and policies relating to the setting of regulations are found in Part Three, Chapter 1 Species, *supra* at 12.

³⁴ Conservation Act 1987, s 26Q(1)(b).

For serious offenders, prosecution is the only successful deterrent to repeat offences. In many relatively simple cases, such as a first offence for fishing without a licence, the cost of prosecution often outweighs the penalties imposed. More effective means of prosecution, such as instant fines, are being investigated and may be introduced by way of changes to legislation in the future.

For compliance and enforcement operations to be efficient, it is necessary to prioritise time and resources. Some balance between concentrating efforts on areas of high intensity fishing and hunting use and high intensity impact is required. Law enforcement should target both maximum encounter rate periods, and also illegal activities posing a threat to the sustainability of the fish and game resource.

The large size of the Eastern Fish and Game Region, and the isolated nature of many of the fishing and hunting areas mean that significant coverage by staff is not possible. Honorary rangers make a large contribution to law enforcement and compliance efforts. Local honorary rangers are warranted by the Director of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council and require training and support from the Eastern Fish and Game Council. They are often the front line contact between anglers and hunters and Fish & Game New Zealand. Their assistance increases the enforcement effectiveness of the Eastern Fish and Game Council.

5.1.1 ISSUES

1. Licence sales are Fish & Game New Zealand's revenue base. Non-licenced anglers and hunters create additional costs, but do not contribute to the management of the fish and game resource.
2. Poaching and non-compliance threaten the sustainability of the sports fish and game bird resource.
3. Spawning streams and game bird moult sites are particularly susceptible to poaching activities.
4. Large numbers of licences can be checked in a short time in intensively used areas, like the Rotorua lakes, or at certain times of the year such as Opening Weekend of the game bird season.
5. The Eastern Fish and Game Region is very large, with many isolated hunting and angling areas.
6. A balance is needed between types of compliance, for example proactive and reactive compliance, and opening day surveys and poaching activities.
7. The effective use of the media can provide education and deterrent roles.
8. The prosecution process is often very resource demanding and alternative enforcement options need to be considered.

5.1.2 OBJECTIVE

Angler and hunter compliance with sports fishing and game bird hunting regulations.

POLICIES

5.1.2(a) To target enforcement exercises at priority sites such as heavily utilised waters/wetlands and times of high use, or high impact activities.

5.1.2(b) To seek cost effective penalty systems for offences against the fishing and hunting regulations, for example instant fines.

5.1.2(c) To maintain a small number of well-trained and supported honorary and stipendiary officers, who are capable of effective enforcement.

5.1.2(d) To contact 10% of licence holders each year.

5.1.2(e) To develop clear guidelines on prosecution processes and alternative enforcement processes, and to initiate and proceed with prosecutions where appropriate.

5.1.2(f) To achieve a level of compliance of at least 95%.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Reported incidents of illegal activity will be given priority for enforcement efforts.

High usage areas and times will be given priority for enforcement efforts.

Advocacy for instant fines.

Maintain a system for evaluating and acting upon information on non-compliance.

Develop and maintain a positive and mutually beneficial working relationship with the New Zealand Police and other relevant enforcement agencies.

Contribute to a national database for ranger activity, incident reports, offence reports, and prosecutions.

Criteria for the appointment of honorary rangers, and annual review of their performance.

Performance measures set for warranted officers.

Training and appropriate resourcing of all warranted officers.

Trained personnel available to prosecute in courts throughout the region.

Education of licence holders as to the fishing and hunting regulations.

Utilising new technology as it becomes available to increase efficiency in education and enforcement.

5.2 COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

BACKGROUND

Licence holders are an integral part in achieving Eastern Fish and Game Council's compliance objectives. Illegal activities are not condoned by the majority of licence holders. Increasing numbers of anglers and hunters, and members of the community in general, report illegal activities to Council. One of the strengths of the Council system is the ability for users of the resource to self-police their own system. This sense of ownership can be reinforced by Council. It is important that the Council effectively encourages reporting of offences and makes use of the assistance of licence holders and the general public to achieve compliance objectives.

5.2.1 ISSUES

1. Often members of the community are not aware of the need for fishing and hunting regulations.
2. Licence holders have a sense of ownership of the fish and game management system.
3. Licence holders and the community need avenues through which to report fish and game offences.

5.2.2 OBJECTIVE

Licence holders and a community who are aware of the need for compliance with fishing and hunting regulations.

POLICIES

5.2.2(a) To encourage the general community to report offences when they occur.

5.2.2(b) To build public cooperation.

5.2.2(c) To publicise successful enforcement efforts, without compromising future compliance activities.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Use of educational material and readily available mechanisms to encourage the public to report offences or concerns.

Ensure the public can easily contact stipendiary officers, and maintain a process for the effective follow up of reports.

Publication of successful enforcement efforts, without compromising future compliance activities.

6 LICENSING

INTRODUCTION

Fish & Game New Zealand is a ‘user-pays, user-says’ funded entity. The Eastern Fish and Game Council has functions under the Conservation Act 1987 to assess the costs attributable to managing sports fish and game and recommend licence fees to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council to recover these costs.³⁵ The Eastern Fish and Game Council also has legislated functions to issue licences for game bird hunting and sports fishing and does so through an efficient nationally coordinated licensing programme.³⁶

Goal 6: To optimise the sale of Eastern Fish and Game Council angling and hunting licences as valued products.

6.1 LICENCE ADMINISTRATION

BACKGROUND

Funding for sports fish and game management is obtained almost solely from the sale of fishing and hunting licences. Fishing and hunting licences purchased in the Eastern Fish and Game Region can be used throughout New Zealand except for sports fishing in the Taupo Fishing District, and game bird hunting in the Chatham Islands. Eastern Fish and Game Council licence sales are therefore affected by national and regional marketing strategies. Licensing administration is coordinated nationally with regional support and an external provider.

6.1.1 ISSUES

1. Financing of sports fish and game management relies on the sale of fishing and hunting licences.
2. Fish and Game licences can be used throughout New Zealand except for sports fishing in the Taupo Fishing District, and game bird hunting in the Chatham Islands.
3. National licensing strategies influence the sale of Eastern Fish and Game Council licences, and returns on regional marketing efforts are distributed nationally.
4. Some licence holders perceive a licence only as a legal requirement rather than a value added product.

³⁵ Conservation Act 1987, s 26Q(d).

³⁶ Ibid, s26Q(f).

6.1.2 OBJECTIVE

Effective and efficient administration, monitoring and marketing³⁷ of the sale of fishing and hunting licences.

POLICIES

6.1.2(a) To participate in the national licensing administration system.

6.1.2(b) To ensure that the licensing system returns all monies owed to the Eastern Fish and Game Council and that licence books are promptly returned.

6.1.2(c) To develop appropriate marketing and sales strategies based on licence sales information.

6.1.2(d) To sell licences in accordance with national and regional marketing strategies.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Utilising national licence database systems and regional agent agreements to manage and monitor licence holders, books and agents.

Review and monitoring of licence sale trends.

6.2 LICENCE AVAILABILITY

BACKGROUND

Part of Fish & Game New Zealand's commitment to improve the services offered to its clients is to ensure that recreational anglers and hunters can easily purchase a licence. A range of licence sale options have been put in place. New technology is used to make licences more available although the majority are still sold by licence agents. As a direct link with Fish & Game New Zealand's licence holders, effective communications between the Eastern Fish and Game Council and agents are vital.

6.2.1 ISSUES

1. Making licences more easily available encourages participation.
2. Licence agents are a direct link with licence holders, so communication between Council and agents must be effective.
3. A range of licensing options are required to meet the diverse needs of anglers and hunters.
4. New technology presents an increasing range of options for making licences available.

³⁷ Marketing and promotion of licence sales is covered in Part Three, Chapter 3 Angler and Hunter Participation, supra at 42.

6.2.2 OBJECTIVE

Licences are readily available for purchase.

POLICIES

6.2.2(a) To provide opportunities for anglers and hunters to purchase licences.

6.2.2(b) Recognise and utilise new technology to make licence purchasing more efficient and accessible.

6.2.2(c) To ensure that licence agents have the ability to sell licences and communicate with anglers and hunters.

6.2.2(d) To provide and maintain a range of licence sale categories for anglers and hunters.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Investigation into innovative and alternative licence purchase options.

Maintenance of regular communications with, and provision of information and support to licence agents.

Advocacy for licence categories that reasonably meet the requirements of anglers and hunters while maintaining the financial base of the Eastern Fish and Game Council.

7. COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

Fish & Game New Zealand is a ‘user-pays, user-says’ organisation. It is managed on a regional basis by twelve regional Fish and Game Councils. Council members for each region are elected by adult whole season licence holders for a three year term. Each Council is made up of not more than twelve members who are current adult whole season licence holders.

Goal 7: To provide for the effective governance of the Fish & Game system by fish and game licence holders.

7.1 COUNCIL ROLES

BACKGROUND

The main role of the Council is to establish the policies and direction for the operation of the Eastern Fish and Game Council and its staff. The Conservation Act 1987 requires regional Fish and Game Councils to meet at least six times each year.³⁸ Meetings are held for Council to consider issues affecting sports fish and game management. The major roles of Council include appointing a manager and other staff, setting policy and ends objectives, approving the Operational Work Programme and budget, and monitoring the achievement of outcomes as specified in the Operational Work Programme. Council is subject to the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. All Council meetings are therefore publicly notified and open to licence holders and interested parties to attend.

In order to achieve its functions, it is essential that Council is effectively serviced. Preparation of agendas, meeting reports, and minutes are part of the manager and staff's commitment to Council. These papers associated with meetings are available to licence holders and the general public. Any organisation or individual may contact the Council for consideration of agenda items for discussion at meetings.

7.1.1 ISSUES

1. Regional Fish and Game Councils are required to meet at least 6 times each year.
2. Sufficient resources need to be allocated to effectively service Council in order to carry out its governance role.
3. Council meetings must be open to the public, and some significant stakeholder groups should be encouraged to participate in Fish and Game governance.
4. Council meetings must be conducted in accordance with relevant legislation.

³⁸ Conservation Act 1987, s S26ZD.

7.1.2 OBJECTIVE

Maintenance and support for the Council in its governance role.

POLICIES

7.1.2(a) To ensure Council understands its roles and responsibilities as governors of Eastern Fish and Game Council, and that Council functions as an effective governance unit.

7.1.2(b) Ensure the Council is adequately resourced to hold Council meetings on a regular basis as per the Conservation Act 1987, including one Annual General Meeting per year.

7.1.2(c) To provide accountability through monitoring the achievement of outcomes as described in the Operational Work Programme.

7.1.2(d) To encourage public participation at Council meetings, including the Annual General Meeting.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Induction and training of councillors.

Provision of information by the regional manager and staff to enable Council to develop policy and provide direction to the Operational Work Programme.

Preparation of minutes resulting from Council meetings.

Advertisement of the date and location of its meetings, and ensure that agendas and minutes are available to licence holders.

Provide the opportunity for organisations, stakeholder groups and member of the public to raise issues for discussion and have input at Council meetings where appropriate.

7.2 COUNCIL ELECTIONS

BACKGROUND

Maintenance of democratic processes is central to the ‘user-pays, user-says’ concept. Fish and Game Council elections are therefore held at three yearly intervals. The Conservation Act 1987 sets out requirements and procedures for elections.³⁹ These processes must be met in order to ensure that elections are democratic and held in accordance with the statute. It is important that participation in the electoral process by adult whole season licence holders is encouraged. Vacancies may arise on the Council from time to time, and these must be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

7.2.1 ISSUES

1. Elections must be democratic and be conducted in accordance with relevant legislation.

³⁹ Conservation Act 1987, s 26Z.

2. Vacancies may arise on the Council between elections.
3. Eastern Fish and Game Council elections generally have a low participation rate, and the process for licence holders to become registered voters is not automatic.

7.2.2 OBJECTIVE

Council elections are carried out when required, in accordance with relevant legislation.

POLICIES

7.2.2(a) To encourage high voter participation and ensure that no adult whole season licence holder is denied the opportunity to be on the electoral role.

7.2.2(b) To ensure that all statutory requirements are met in an efficient and timely fashion.

7.2.2(c) To follow established guidelines for replacement Councillors where a vacancy arises between elections.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Promotion of participation and licence holder involvement in elections.

Maintenance of an electoral roll of all adult whole season fish and game licence holders.

Carrying out Council elections when required, in accordance with relevant legislation.

8. PLANNING AND REPORTING

INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Fish and Game Council is an independent business and requires effective planning and reporting systems. Preparation of key planning documents assists the cost effective management of Council activities. The Council has a statutory requirement to undertake long and short term planning and reporting which enables the establishment of clear direction and to provide accountability to licence holders. As there are formal procedures for consultation with users of the resource, anglers and hunters are able to contribute to the planning process.

Goal 8: To ensure cost effective and appropriate business management of the fish and game resource.

8.1 EFFECTIVE BUSINESS PLANNING

BACKGROUND

In addition to standard business planning practices, the Conservation Act 1987 places a number of statutory requirements on Fish and Game Councils.⁴⁰ The responsibilities to be met include:

- Preparation of a Sports Fish and Game Management Plan. The plan sets out the ways in which the Eastern Fish and Game Council will manage the fish and game resource for the following 10 years. The plan must be reviewed after 10 years, but may be reviewed sooner.
- Approval of an Operational Work Programme (“OWP”). The OWP must be approved annually by the Minister of Conservation until an approved Sports Fish and Game Management Plan is in place. The OWP describes projects to be completed for the year, staff time and costs involved, and budgetary requirements. The OWP should address the objectives defined in the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan.
- Preparation of an annual report, including a Statement of Service Performance. An annual report is presented to Parliament, and to the Annual General Meeting of the Eastern Fish and Game Council. The annual report provides assistance with on-going management planning. It documents activities undertaken for the year, and the degree to which objectives are being met by the Council.

The reports are a public check on the Council’s performance. They provide an assessment of the organisation as a cost effective manager of the fish and game resource in the region.

⁴⁰ Conservation Act 1987, ss 26Q and R. A full reproduction of these Sections can be found in Appendix 5 Extract from the Conservation Act 1987, supra at 113.

8.1.1 ISSUES

1. There are significant statutory planning and reporting requirements that must be met by the Eastern Fish and Game Council.
2. Planning is essential for Eastern Fish and Game Council to be a cost-effective and transparent manager of the regions fish and game resource.

8.1.2 OBJECTIVE

Plans and reports that enable the Eastern Fish and Game Council to operate a successful business while sustainably managing the regions sports fish and game bird resource.

POLICIES

8.1.2(a) To monitor performance on a regular basis.

8.1.2(b) To consult with licence holders and interested parties in the planning process.

8.1.2(c) To prepare annual budgetary estimates for the Eastern Fish and Game Council.

8.1.2(d) To plan annual Operational Work Programmes through the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan.

8.1.2(e) To complete all statutory reporting within the time frames set by the Eastern Fish and Game Council and legislation.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Preparation of annual budgets and operational plans in accordance with Eastern Fish and Game Council policies and timelines.

Operation of a consultative process with anglers and hunters and interested parties to develop annual Operational Work Programmes.

Review financial performance, work effort and projects and compare to budget and Operational Work Programme.

Provision of an operational report and financial report to each meeting of the Eastern Fish and Game Council.

Preparation of annual reports, including Statement of Service Performance and financial statements to present to Parliament and the Annual General Meeting of the Eastern Fish and Game Council.

Periodic reviews to ensure that the Annual Operational Work Programmes conform to the requirements of the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan.

8.2 NATIONAL COORDINATION

BACKGROUND

The Eastern Fish and Game Council does not operate in isolation. An important aspect of effectively managing sports fish and game throughout New Zealand is liaison with other regional Fish and Game Councils and the New Zealand Fish and Game Council. Fish and Game Councils can work co-operatively on a regional basis to improve the management of the resource. Opportunities also exist for Councils to work collectively on nationally important issues. Further opportunities to share information and skills should be identified to ensure that regions work effectively together.

8.2.1 ISSUES

1. National coordination of Fish & Game New Zealand activities must be effective.
2. Some issues and functions of Eastern Fish and Game Council are more appropriately dealt with at a national level.
3. Regions should be able to offer assistance or advice to other regions on issues that they are familiar with to increase national efficiencies.
4. Effective communication and cooperation between regional Fish and Game Councils and the New Zealand Fish and Game Council will lead to better value and services for all licence holders.

8.2.2 OBJECTIVE

All regional Fish and Game Councils and New Zealand Fish and Game Council working effectively together.

POLICIES

8.2.2(a) To maintain effective liaison with New Zealand Fish and Game Council and regional Fish and Game Councils.

8.2.2(b) To contribute to nationally coordinated or cross-regional initiatives where regional resources allow.

8.2.2(c) To attend organised meetings within the Fish & Game New Zealand structure.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Maintenance of good communications with New Zealand Fish and Game Council and other regional Fish and Game Councils.

Response to requests for comment or information from within the Fish & Game New Zealand structure.

Participation in nationally coordinated groups such as resource management, research, compliance, and licencing.

9. ADMINISTRATION

Goal 9: To manage the business of the Eastern Fish and Game Council in an effective and efficient manner.

9.1 ADMINISTRATION

BACKGROUND

Administration is made up of a wide range of non-specific activities that are necessary for the general functioning of the Eastern Fish and Game Council. Effective administration contributes to the high level of professionalism within the Council, and between the Council and outside organisations. Financial administration requires well-planned budgeting, reporting and accounting systems. Because Fish and Game regions are funded from a national pool of licence revenue there is also a need to plan, budget and report to consistent formats. Systems have been developed to ensure that both national and regional objectives for fish and game management are met.

Council and staff require a suitable work environment in order to effectively carry out their responsibilities and functions. The work environment includes office areas; administrative support; field, office, and hatchery equipment; grounds; and off-site buildings. On-going maintenance and replacement of these assets and systems is an important aspect of Eastern Fish and Game Council's operations.

9.1.1 ISSUES

1. Financial administration requires well-planned budgeting, reporting, and accounting systems, and to allow comparison across Fish and Game regions.
2. The Eastern Fish and Game Council requires a suitable work environment.

9.1.2 OBJECTIVE

A suitable work environment, equipment, and effective administrative support for the Eastern Fish and Game Council.

POLICIES

9.1.2(a) To provide administrative support for the operations of the Eastern Fish and Game Council in accordance with national financial and reporting policies.

9.1.2(b) To provide suitable field and office equipment for staff to effectively carry out their duties.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Maintenance of all Eastern Fish and Game Council assets and a replacement schedule for all office, field, and hatchery equipment.

Maintenance of administrative systems to ensure effective running of Eastern Fish and Game Council's activities.

Maintenance of an efficient accounting system.

9.2 STAFF

BACKGROUND

The operational structure for the staff group allocates individual responsibilities and accountabilities according to the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan and annual Operational Work Programmes. Staff training is essential to ensure that staff are kept up-to-date with advances in knowledge on fish and game matters, resource management, administration, and technology. Opportunities for staff development improve the skill base and functioning of the staff team and individuals. It is also a requirement for the Eastern Fish and Game Council to do all that is reasonable to prevent personal injury and to protect everyone from foreseeable work hazards, to ensure a safe work place for all, including contractors, sub-contractors and the public, when they come into contact with work activities.

9.2.1 ISSUES

1. Staff need to be aware of their responsibilities and roles.
2. Staff need to be up-to-date with advances in fish and game knowledge, resource management, and technology.
3. Maintaining a safe work place requires regular hazard identification, assessment and action to improve standards of health and safety, training, and involvement of all staff.

9.2.2 OBJECTIVE

An effective and efficient staff group.

POLICIES

9.2.2(a) To provide for the regional manager to allocate individual staff responsibilities and accountabilities according to the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan and annual Operational Work Programmes.

9.2.2(b) To meet national guidelines regarding staff employment.

9.2.2(c) To meet the requirements of Sections 56 and 58 of the State Sector Act 1988.

9.2.2(d) To provide equal opportunity for all job applicants.

9.2.2(e) To maintain effective internal communications amongst staff.

9.2.2(f) To provide opportunities for staff training and development.

9.2.2(g) To ensure, staff and other affected parties, safety as per the requirements of the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Maintaining regular staff and planning meetings.

Specific training opportunities to suit the individual requirements of staff and the Council.

Annual staff salary and job assessments carried out between staff and the regional manager.

Adherence to the provisions and intent of the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, Privacy Act 1993, and other legislation relevant to Eastern Fish and Game Council's operation.

Meeting national policies relating to occupational health and safety.

9.3 ALTERNATIVE FUNDING

BACKGROUND

While Fish & Game New Zealand's work is financed through the sale of licences, there are some projects where alternative sources of funding are more appropriate. Outside funding may also be useful in cases where projects have a high public profile and there is benefit in terms of publicity or public relations to external organisations.

9.3.1 ISSUES

1. Alternative funding, such as external grants or sponsorship, may be more appropriate for some projects.

9.3.2 OBJECTIVE

Seek funding from sources other than licence revenue for specific projects where appropriate.

POLICIES

9.3.2(a) To investigate alternative options for funding of projects that may be external or additional to Eastern Fish and Game Council's core activities.

9.3.2(b) To pursue sponsorship or advertising that is compatible with fish and game management values.

METHODS

Methods may include but not be limited to:

Promotion of fish and game values and mutual benefits to external organisations.

Consideration of a wide range of funding options.

Investigation into potential for long-term partnerships to contribute to the management of the Eastern Fish and Game Council.

PART FOUR

RESOURCE DESCRIPTION

EASTERN REGION FISH & GAME NEW ZEALAND



SUB-REGIONS

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 ROTORUA LAKES SUB-REGION | 2 TAURANGA SUB-REGION | 3 TAUPO SUB-REGION |
| 4 WHAKATANE SUB-REGION | 5 GISBORNE SUB-REGION | 6 WAIROA SUB-REGION |

1 THE REGION

1.1 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The area managed as the Eastern Fish and Game Region is described in *Gazette* No. 83 of 24th May 1990 at page 1861 (SO Plan 58495). The boundary runs from Waihi Beach around the east coast to a few kilometres north of the Mohaka River mouth. It then follows the southern side of the Waiau River catchment, and south along the Kaimanawa ranges to Mount Ruapehu. From Mount Ruapehu, the region boundary runs north to Lake Maraetai, along the Mamaku Plateau and the Kaimai range to Waihi Beach.

The Eastern Fish and Game Council is responsible for managing the freshwater sports fish and game bird resource within this boundary, except for the fishery contained within Lake Taupo and its tributaries. The Lake Taupo fishery is managed by Department of Conservation. The region includes the urban areas of Rotorua, Te Puke, Tauranga, Katikati, Whakatane, Kawerau, Opotiki, Murupara, Taupo, Turangi, Mangakino, Gisborne, and Wairoa.

1.2 GEOLOGY AND VEGETATION

Within the Eastern Fish and Game Region, a belt of old sedimentary rock forms the Huirau and Raukumara mountain ranges. These ranges separate younger sedimentary rock in the east from recent volcanic rock (predominantly ignimbrite and rhyolite) in the west. Major active faults pass through the middle of the region. Recent alluvial deposits are scattered throughout the region, and layers of pumice cover vast areas.

The belt of old sedimentary material making up the ranges contains greywacke rock. Greywacke provides hard, rounded gravels to the river systems in the eastern Bay of Plenty, and to streams with headwaters in the mountain ranges. These river systems generally provide good spawning habitat for trout. In contrast, the thick porous cover of pumice over much of the Central Volcanic Plateau has resulted in few surface flows and fewer trout spawning areas. On the eastern side of the ranges, the younger sedimentary rocks such as siltstone and mudstone are quite unstable. This underlying geology is associated with accelerated erosion where vegetation has been cleared for land development.

Large areas of land in the Eastern Fish and Game Region have been cleared of indigenous vegetation for land development. However, Te Urewera National Park, Tongariro National Park, and a number of smaller conservation areas provide high quality habitat and wilderness areas. Other land uses in the region include pastoral farming, cropping, horticulture, exotic plantation forestry, and urban development.

The diversity of high quality populations of different species is a major feature of the Eastern Fish and Game Region. The region has a wide range of sports fish and game birds, and the varying geology and topography throughout the region has led to a variety of habitats. Excellent rainbow trout lake and river fisheries, high quality brown trout fisheries, wilderness angling experiences, superb pheasant and California quail hunting, and a range of waterfowl hunting areas make up some of the angling and hunting opportunities in the region.

1.3 ELECTORAL SUB-REGIONS

The Eastern Fish and Game Region is divided into six electoral wards. The sports fish and game bird resource descriptions are based on these wards. The six electoral wards are as below, and their boundaries are shown on the previous map.

- *Rotorua*
- *Tauranga*
- *Taupo*
- *Whakatane*
- *Gisborne*
- *Wairoa*

2. SPECIES

A wide range of sports fish and game bird species are present in the Eastern Fish and Game Region. As discussed in the Species chapter of this Management Plan, the Eastern Fish and Game Council aims to manage these species in the recreational interests of anglers and hunters, while maintaining sustainable population levels.⁴¹

2.1 SPORTS FISH

Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)

Rainbow trout are present in rivers, lakes, and canals throughout the Eastern Fish and Game Region. They are the most common sports fish species in the region, and are the major component of the Rotorua lakes fishery. Hatchery-reared rainbow trout are liberated into the Rotorua lakes, and some East Coast Lakes, and self-sustaining populations exist in the Waikato lakes, Lake Aniwhenua, and Lake Waikaremoana.

Riverine populations of rainbow trout are also self-sustaining. The Rangitaiki catchment, Wairoa catchment, Whakatane/Waimana River system, Waioeka River, Tarawera River, Waikato catchment and Kaituna River all support good populations of rainbow trout, as do a number of smaller river systems in the region. A variety of fish densities, maximum sizes and scenic and wilderness angling experiences exist across the region.

Brown trout (*Salmo trutta*)

Although not as widespread as rainbow trout, brown trout are a major feature of the Eastern Fish and Game Region's sports fish resource and are widely distributed. Brown trout co-exist with rainbow trout in a number of river and lake fisheries, but have slightly different habitat preferences. All brown trout populations in the region are self-sustaining.

The Lake Rotorua brown trout fishery is of particular significance, while Lake Waikaremoana is internationally renowned for the quality of its shoreline brown trout angling. Some rivers in the region contain only brown trout. The Motu River is a very high quality brown trout fishery, and the Ngamuwahine River supports a moderate density population of large brown trout.

Brook char (*Salvelinus fontinalis*)

There are two known small riverine populations of brook char in the Wairakei and Tahunaatara catchments. Although these catchments are not generally fished for brook char, they are important sources of genetic material for hatchery breeding programmes and to ensure the ongoing availability of the species in the region. Brook char have been liberated throughout the region in the past, but have not survived in most waterways in the presence of more aggressive and successful rainbow trout. Brook char have survived in Lake Tikitapu, and are periodically released there to provide further diversity of opportunity for anglers.

Tiger trout (*S. trutta* x *S. fontinalis*)

⁴¹ See Part Three, Chapter 1. Species, supra at 12.

Tiger trout are a hybrid cross between female brown trout and male brook char. They are currently present in Lake Rotoma, where they provide an alternative species for anglers. As tiger trout are infertile, hatchery liberations are necessary to maintain population levels.

Tench (*Tinca tinca*)

A population of tench is present in Lake McLaren, after an illegal release several years ago. Little is known about the tench population, and the existing regulations prohibit fishing for tench using standard coarse fishing techniques.

2.2 GAME BIRDS

Mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Mallard duck is the most prolific game bird species in the Eastern Fish and Game Region and is the most common game bird in the hunter's bag. It is widely distributed throughout rivers, lakes, coastal margins, wetland areas, and farm ponds.

Mallard duck were originally introduced to New Zealand from Great Britain in 1867, but did not establish until American mallard duck were introduced in 1937. Mallard duck have generally adapted well to habitat changes brought about through changes in land use. In many areas, populations may vary significantly from year to year. Larger populations generally occur after a wet spring, which provides good breeding and juvenile rearing conditions. Conversely, dry spring conditions often lead to a poor breeding season and lower bird numbers. The large areas of permanent water in parts of the Eastern Fish and Game Region, however, mean that mallard populations are not as susceptible to changes in weather patterns as in some parts of New Zealand. The Gisborne sub-region is an exception to this, as very few areas of permanent water exist in that area.

Grey duck (*A. superciliosa*)

Grey duck are native to New Zealand, and phenetically indistinct from the Pacific black duck which occurs in Australia and the southern Pacific region. They favour wilderness areas. The population of grey duck in the Eastern Fish and Game Region appears to be gradually declining. Loss of habitat and hybridisation between grey and mallard duck are thought to be the main reasons for their decline.

New Zealand Shoveler duck (*A. rhynchos*)

New Zealand shoveler duck are another native species, which favours shallow, productive wetland areas. They are very mobile and not particularly common in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

Paradise shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*)

Paradise shelduck populations have benefited from land development in the Eastern Fish and Game Region and thrive in open pasture. Since the 1960s paradise shelduck numbers have gradually increased throughout the region, particularly on the East Coast. The popularity of this species as a game bird varies with hunters. Paradise shelduck are relatively easy to hunt, and are therefore a good introductory game bird. This feature, and relatively low fecundity, means that they are susceptible to over-harvest if not properly managed. Eastern Fish and Game Council

issues more permits to disturb for paradise shelduck than any other species, mainly because they congregate in large numbers to moult.

Black swan (*Cygnus stratus*)

Black swan are common throughout the A1 and A2 zones in the Eastern Fish and Game Region. They tend to be a rather polarising species with the public, with some people complaining about high numbers, and others enjoying their presence. Apart from local populations at the Whakaki wetlands and Tiniroto lakes, very low populations of black swan exist in the Gisborne and Wairoa areas. Swan are not generally targeted by hunters to a large extent.

Pukeko (*Porphyrio porphyrio*)

Pukeko are widely distributed throughout the Eastern Fish and Game Region. Although surveys have not been carried out to estimate population sizes, they are present in reasonable numbers. Pukeko is a native species that has adapted well to some changes in land use, although pukeko prefer wet, swampy areas. The birds may cause a nuisance to landowners, in both urban and rural situations, and are the second most common species for which permits to disturb are issued. Pukeko are more popular with hunters during poor dabbling duck seasons. Their feathers are frequently in demand for fly tying or weaving korowai (cloak).

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Pheasant are found throughout the Eastern Fish and Game Region, and particularly good pheasant populations exist in Kaingaroa Forest, and along the Bay of Plenty and Gisborne coastal strips. Annual harvest surveys show that more pheasant are shot in the region than any other part of the country. Large areas of forestry and cropping provide excellent habitat for the species. Together with Northland, the Eastern Fish and Game Region offers the best pheasant hunting opportunities in New Zealand, although the erosion of public access to some hunting locations is restricting opportunities.

California quail (*Callipepla californica*), **Brown quail** (*Synoicus ypsilophorus*), **Bobwhite quail** (*Colinus virginianus*)

Kaingaroa Forest and other areas of plantation forest support good populations of California quail. Large numbers of these species are also found in orchard areas near Katikati and Te Puke. There are low numbers of California quail in Gisborne and Wairoa. Brown quail are found in low numbers and isolated populations in various parts of the region. Bobwhite quail have recently been introduced onto the licence as there is a small isolated population, which is maintained through private liberations.

Red legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

An extremely small population of red legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa*) historically inhabited Kaingaroa Forest, although it is likely they have died out. Red legged partridge were previously bred and released in the Eastern Fish and Game Region, but the species did not establish. Some birds are still released on game preserves.

3. HABITATS

3.1 ROTORUA

The Rotorua sub-region comprises the Otanewainuku and Rotorua ecological districts, and it contains the Rotorua chain of lakes and the volcanic plateau between the lakes and the east coast.

The most significant feature in the Rotorua sub-region is the Rotorua chain of lakes. The Rotorua lakes are 15 natural lakes of volcanic origin. They are clustered within a relatively small area at an elevation of approximately 300m asl. Lakes Rotorua, Rotoiti, Rotokawau, Rotoehu, and Rotoma lie at the northern end of the group. Lakes Okataina, Okareka, Tikitapu, Rotokakahi, and Tarawera are in the centre, while Lakes Rotomahana and Rerewhakaaitu lie on the southern side of Mount Tarawera. To the west are the smaller Lakes Okaro, Ngahewa, and Ngapouri.

Lake Rotorua occupies the floor of a caldera formed by the eruption of Mamaku ignimbrite. The larger Okataina Volcanic Centre forms much of the rest of the Rotorua lakes district. The lakes themselves are in dammed valleys and former explosion craters. Volcanic and geothermal activity are significant features of the Rotorua sub-region, and influence the fisheries to greater or lesser extents.

In geological terms, the lakes are relatively young. Due to their volcanic origins they exhibit a range of physical and bio-chemical characteristics. Groundwater flows are the principle regulators of lake levels, and the few in-flowing tributary streams generally have unstable volcanic substrates. The deeper and larger lakes, for example Okataina, are more oligotrophic in nature, while the shallower or smaller lakes are tending towards meso-eutrophic conditions.

The Rotorua lakes are of special significance to the Te Arawa people, and have historical and traditional values. Tangata whenua value water as the essence of life, or mauri – the spiritual life force. Maori are the kaitiaki of this mauri, and have the responsibility to protect it for future generations. Te Arawa relate to their lakes as taonga (treasures). Te Arawa identify with its lakes and the tribal mana is also reflected in waiata (song) and haka (dance).

While Te Arawa gifted many of the lakes to the Crown in 1924, Lake Rotokakahi remains in private ownership. It is managed under its own Board of Control, and is not currently stocked by Eastern Fish and Game Council. Public access is not available to Lake Rotokakahi. The lake supports a trout fishery, and has good spawning tributaries. To protect trout during spawning and migration back to the lake, the Board of Control close fishing for a period each year.

There are thirteen lakes in the Rotorua sub-region that support trout fisheries managed by Eastern Fish and Game Council. The exceptions are Lake Rotokawau and Lake Rotokakahi, which respectively do not contain suitable habitat or are in private ownership. There is a wide diversity in lake size, depth, catchment characteristic, trophic status, water quality and natural trout spawning habitat available. A common feature is that there is often a lack of suitable spawning streams for many of the lakes. Inflows are typically via groundwater or short cold water spring flows. The pumice beds in some of the streams also makes them unsuitable for

successful trout spawning. Growing conditions for trout within some lakes are exceptional, and the diversity of habitat types allows for a range of management options.

The original forest north of Rotorua was mainly cleared for farming, as was much of the former mature forest between Lake Rotoiti and Lake Tarawera. Today the predominant land use is pastoral stock farming. However, there are still large areas of the plateau in indigenous forest and increasing areas of exotic plantation forestry. The city of Rotorua is located on the southern and western shores of Lake Rotorua. Residential development is becoming more widespread around lake shores, and presents some threats to the natural character and amenity values of the lakes, as well as placing additional pressures on water quality through waste disposal and stormwater discharges. Through their Regional Water and Land Plan, the Bay of Plenty Regional Council has introduced regulations and implemented Action Plans in an effort to improve water quality in several of the worst affected lakes.

3.1.1 SPORTS FISH

The Rotorua lakes are the most significant angling resource in the Eastern Fish and Game Region. The lakes and their tributary streams provide a wide range of angling opportunities within a small geographical area. It is this diversity and the high quality of the rainbow trout fisheries in particular that makes the Rotorua lakes fishery internationally significant.

Trout were first introduced into the lakes in the late 1880s, and for the first 30-40 years fry of different species were released into most of the lakes. Initial introductions showed that conditions in all of the lakes, with the exception of Lake Rotokawau, were ideal for trout growth, and some of the lakes have proven to be capable of allowing fish to grow at exceptional rates. Rainbow trout are now dominant throughout the Rotorua sub-region, with brown trout also present in Lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti. In addition, tiger trout are released into Lake Rotoma and brook char are present in some of the lakes.

The nature of many of the lake catchments means that there are insufficient spawning streams to support self-sustaining populations of trout in the lakes at current levels of harvest. In order to maintain trout populations at a level that provides sufficient recreational angling opportunities for anglers, liberations of hatchery reared trout are carried out on an annual basis. In the 1950s management practices shifted from liberating huge numbers of fry to supplementary stocking of smaller numbers of yearlings. Although there are wild populations of trout in all the lakes, most of them are supplemented by liberating hatchery reared fish.

Trout for liberations are reared at the Ngongotaha hatchery. They are generally produced from crosses of trout from the Te Wairoa trap at Lake Tarawera. Lake Tarawera and its tributaries are therefore particularly important as part of the Ngongotaha hatchery breeding programme, which aims to maintain and enhance the quality and size of fish produced.

As Lake Rotorua has a large number of suitable spawning streams, the trout population is self-sustaining and does not require hatchery liberations to maintain numbers. Brown trout are a significant feature of the Lake Rotorua fishery, and trophy sized brown trout are not uncommon.

The Rotorua lakes rainbow trout fisheries provide a diverse range of fish size and population density. This diversity is a function of both the natural bio-physical characteristics of each lake,

and the influence of varied hatchery stocking regimes. In general, larger deeper lakes such as Rotoiti, Tarawera, and Okataina contain populations of larger fish, while those such as Okareka, Rotoma, and Rerewhakaaitu produce trout of a smaller mean size. Supplementary stocking enables Eastern Fish and Game Council to actively manage different lakes for different desired population characteristics to a certain extent.

Angling in the Rotorua sub-region attracts large numbers of domestic and international visitors, as well as a strong local following. The NIWA National Angler Survey of angler use has been carried out every seven years from the 1995/1996 trout fishing season. The most recent 2007/2008 survey estimated that 166,700 angler visits occurred annually on the Rotorua lakes and tributary streams. This represents 77 percent of the whole region's angling effort. The most popular lakes of Rotorua, Rotoiti and Tarawera make up 114,000 angler visits between them. Lake Rotorua, Tarawera, and Rotoiti receive the second, third, and fourth highest angling pressure in New Zealand, after Lake Taupo.

The trout fishery makes a large contribution to the Rotorua economy, and there is a high influx of tourists using the Rotorua fishery. Trout related activities support numerous businesses, and anglers contribute through use of accommodation, purchases of food and fuel, and a number of other expenditures during visits to Rotorua. Local Iwi have a significant interest in management of the Rotorua lakes resource, and have a statutory role in their management via the Te Arawa Lakes Settlement Act (2006) and the Te Arawa Lakes Fisheries Regulations (2006).

3.1.2 GAME BIRDS

The Rotorua lakes provide a large amount of habitat for waterfowl. As they are permanent water bodies, waterfowl populations in the Rotorua sub-region are less likely to vary with year to year variations in rainfall than other parts of the Eastern Fish and Game Region. While a dry spring and summer may mean an unsuccessful breeding season for many waterfowl populations, those populations resident on the Rotorua lakes are more stable. On Lake Rotorua in particular, botulism can be a significant issue in some years.

There are moderate to high numbers of waterfowl on the lakes. Black swan make up a high proportion of the waterfowl on the lakes, and are most common on the shallow eutrophic lakes. Lakes Rotorua and Lake Rotoehu, in particular, have substantial littoral zones that provide macrophyte growth suitable for black swan grazing.

Lakes Rotorua, Rotoma, Rotoiti, and Rotoehu have high waterfowl populations. Hunting on these lakes is restricted through urban and rural residential development. These lakes have a number of reserves which are unavailable for hunting, primarily on the grounds of public safety. The areas unavailable to recreational hunters are likely to increase with the expansion of urbanisation.

Although the Rotorua chain of lakes provides a lot of important habitat for game birds, there is little quality habitat in the surrounding area. The lagoons and stock ponds of the Kaharoa - Mamaku area provide the only sizeable wetted areas outside of the main lakes. These ponds are heavily used by paradise shelduck.

Rotoehu Forest and the adjoining landholdings are very important upland game bird habitat. This area has high pheasant numbers, along with California and brown quail, and has also held a population of red legged partridge in the past.

3.2 TAURANGA

The Tauranga area is made up of the Tauranga and Otanewainuku ecological districts. Topography is dominated by low coastal plains, sand dunes, low hills, and dissected plateaux - the Kaimai Ranges and the Mamaku Plateau. The Tauranga Harbour, small estuaries, coastal dunes, and the plateau are features of the area.

The headwaters of the Tauranga rivers rise in the volcanic ash country of the Mamaku plateau and generally flow in a northerly direction into the Bay of Plenty. Many of the streams are short and steep, and often have waterfalls and deep gorges along their lengths. Headwaters of many of the Tauranga rivers have cool summer water temperatures. In the last decade or two there has been considerable conversion of native forest to exotic pine plantation around headwaters on the Kaimai-Mamaku plateau. Many upper reaches remain in native vegetation, but the geology confines the stream channels and limits sports fish habitat. The lower reaches of most of the Tauranga streams flow through highly modified semi-intensive agricultural areas and finish in estuarine marshes. Intensive horticulture is the main land use in the lower Tauranga area.

3.2.1 SPORTS FISH

Hydro-electric power generation has extensively modified the primary catchment of the Wairoa River. A total of 13 tributaries have been dammed or diverted, creating five power stations. Lake McLaren and the Ruahihi Canal are located close to Tauranga city and are some of the most popular angling locations in the district. Access across private land to the upper Wairoa River system is restricted by landowners. A tributary of the Wairoa, the Opuiaki, was once a trophy rainbow trout fishery of national reputation before the diversion of most of its flow as part of the hydro development in the 1970's. A shift from a predominantly rainbow trout fishery to one dominated by brown trout has since been reported.

Both brown and rainbow trout are common in the Tauranga area, with trout populations being typified by medium densities of smaller fish. Brown trout are the dominant species in the lower Opuiaki, Waimapu and Ngamuwahine Rivers, and are often large. Rainbow trout are predominant in the Pongakawa, Waitahanui, Tuapiro and Wainui streams and upper Wairoa River system. The Kaituna River provides excellent river fishing close to Rotorua. The Mangorewa Stream flows into the Kaituna River below the gorge and provides an important cold water refuge for trout during the summer.

Tench are present in Lake McLaren. It is believed that they became established there after an illegal release. Very little is known about the population, and the fishery is not currently promoted. Pest fish including rudd and koi carp have been found in the Tauranga area and the potential spread of these species to other waters in the Eastern Fish and Game Region is a concern.

The Tauranga sub-region is predominantly fished by local residents. There are strong local user groups who vigorously support the fishery resource. An increase in urbanisation and

intensification of land use is occurring in the Tauranga area. This changing land use is likely to influence angler access. Tauranga is the fastest growing urban area in New Zealand. The increased population appears to be generally resulting in an increase in the number of participants from this area.

3.2.2 GAME BIRDS

There is a wide range of game bird habitats in the Tauranga sub-region. Changes in geology and land use from the headwaters to the coastal margins provide habitat for waterfowl and upland game. The Tauranga Harbour and smaller estuaries are a feature of the area and provide important habitat for waterfowl. The main species using these estuaries are black swan and paradise shelduck. The Tauranga Harbour is becoming increasingly important as black swan habitat as it supports an increasing proportion of the region's swan population. An increase in the black swan population on Tauranga Harbour also coincided with a population decrease on the Waikato lakes due to a collapse of macrophyte beds.

Kaituna Wildlife Management Reserve is the largest remaining wetland in the Bay of Plenty. It provides habitat for a range of game bird and protected species. In other parts of the Tauranga sub-region, the mix of damp undeveloped areas and developed horticulture and cropping also provides ideal habitat for pukeko. Urbanisation in the area may lead to an increase in conflicts between residents in urban areas and pukeko, which are sometimes seen as a nuisance in residential environments.

The coastal dunes and coastal margins in the Tauranga area provide ideal pheasant habitat. The Tauranga pheasant hunting population is considered one of the most significant opportunities in the region.

3.3 TAUPO

Lake Taupo and its outlet, the Waikato River, are the main features of the Taupo sub-region. Much of the sub-region is volcanic in origin, making up the central volcanic plateau, and there are significant areas of geothermal activity. The Waikato River catchment is in the Atiamuri Ecological District. The topography and geology is relatively complex, including the Paeroa range formed by a tilted ignimbrite block, rolling to rugged hill country, and pumice alluvium on low lying areas. Parts of the Waikato River are influenced by geothermal fields, as are many of the streams flowing from the Paeroa Ranges.

Indigenous forest in the Taupo sub-region has been widely logged, apart from areas in the Kaimanawa Range and Tongariro National Park. The original forest cover is mainly confined to the Paeroa Range and a few isolated pockets elsewhere. Land use in the Waikato River catchment is predominantly pastoral farming and exotic plantation forestry. Dairy farming is particularly important in the Ngakuru, Reporoa, and Waikite areas. Much of the original wetland area associated with oxbows in the Waikato River has been lost through drainage for agricultural purposes or river modification for electricity generation.

The Waikato River has been highly modified for hydro electricity generation purposes. There are five hydro impoundments on the river in the Eastern Fish and Game Region. The development of the hydro schemes has had impacts on both the sports fish and game bird

habitats. Although the establishment of the hydro schemes created lake fishing opportunities, these are not as significant as the original river fishery, particularly in comparison to the very high quality lake fisheries in other parts of the region. Operation of the schemes also adversely affects game bird habitat and the trout fishery. Rapidly fluctuating river levels and the steep sided channels that have formed as a result of river fluctuations both make angling and hunting on many parts of the river difficult. In addition, these characteristics provide poor waterfowl nesting conditions. Waterfowl breeding can be further impacted through the loss of eggs and young birds due to sudden rises in the river level.

3.3.1 SPORTS FISH

Although Lake Taupo is a major feature of the Taupo sub-region, Fish and Game does not manage the Lake Taupo sports fishery. The fishery is managed by Department of Conservation, including the lake and tributaries flowing into its catchment. The Eastern Fish and Game Council managed sports fishery in the Waikato sub-region therefore consists of the Waikato River, five hydro lakes on the river, and a number of tributaries flowing into the mainstem river.

The Waikato River has been extensively modified for the generation of hydro-electricity. There are five man-made impoundments within the Waikato sub-region: Lakes Aratiatia, Ohakuri, Atiamuri, Whakamaru, and Maraetai. Rainbow and brown trout are common throughout the Waikato River catchment, with rainbow trout predominant. High numbers of small fish are a feature of the Waikato hydro lake fisheries. Populations throughout the Waikato River system are self-sustaining and range in character from river resident in some upper tributaries to lake populations and the mainstem Waikato river fishery. Brook char are also present in some small upper tributaries where rainbow trout have been excluded. They have been reported in the Tahunaatara River and Wairakei Stream.

Activities associated with operation of the hydro-electricity schemes on the Waikato River adversely affect angler access to the river, stream mouths, and the hydro lakes. They may also adversely affect sports fish habitat. The schemes have significantly changed the nature of the Waikato River fishery from a large riverine fishery to a slower flowing river with a number of impoundments along its length.

Many of the streams flowing into the Waikato River are spring fed. During the summer they provide important cold water refuges at their confluences where trout congregate. Much of the Waikato River is geothermally influenced, so water temperatures can become particularly warm during the summer. These cold water confluences are popular fisheries at that time of the year, and often provide high catch rates.

The fisheries are primarily used by local anglers. The stream mouths on the Waikato River attract visitors during the summer, particularly the Pueto, Kaiwhitiwhiti, and Torepatutahi Streams. There is some fishing on the mainstem of the Waikato River and reservoir fishing on the hydro lakes is popular. There are a number of opportunities to enhance access in the Waikato sub-region. The fishery is under-utilised at present, and has the potential to support higher numbers of anglers.

A variety of pest fish are present in the Waikato River system and these species present significant threats to other waters in the region where they currently do not occur and there are highly valued trout fisheries. Catfish and rudd are common in the Waikato system within the Eastern Fish and Game Region, and koi carp can be found in the Waikato system in the adjoining Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Region. The coarse sports fish tench are also found in the lower Waikato system but not within this catchment in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

3.3.2 GAME BIRDS

The Taupo sub-region game bird resource can be divided into two populations: birds inhabiting the Taupo basin and those birds making up the Waikato River and hydro lakes populations.

The Taupo basin has relatively low populations of most game bird species. Moderate populations of California quail are present in the exotic plantation forests to the east and south of Lake Taupo. Pheasants are found throughout the area but numbers are low to sparse.

The southern sector of Lake Taupo as well as Lake Kuratau, Lake Rotoaira, and Lake Otamangakau provide ideal habitat for black swan, and high numbers are present. They are mobile between the lakes and are often unevenly distributed. The distribution of paradise shelduck follows similar patterns. Paradise shelduck also occupy some large ponds upstream from the Kuratau hydro impoundment, known as the Kuratau moulting ponds. There are moderate numbers of dabbling duck on Lakes Rotoaira and Otamangakau. Grey duck appears to make up a higher proportion of the dabbling duck population in the Taupo and Gisborne areas than in other parts of the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

The farmed southern headwaters of the Rangitaiki River are closely linked to the Taupo basin. Lake Pouarua on Lochinvar Station is a particularly important habitat in this area.

The Waikato River between Huka Falls and the region boundary at Lake Maraetai contains five hydro-electricity lakes. Water is fed into the system through the Lake Taupo control gates, and passed from impoundment to impoundment down the river. There are relatively large fluctuations in the river level and the water levels of the lakes depending on electricity generation requirements. Use of the Waikato River for hydro-electricity generation has a significant impact on waterfowl productivity, hunter access, and hunting opportunities. The recent construction of the Ohaaki wetland hopes to offset some of the adverse effects of hydro-electricity generation, particularly on nesting success and duckling survival.

The distribution of game birds in the Atiamuri ecological district largely reflects land use patterns. A large proportion of the land is used for exotic plantation forestry, while dairy farming is the predominant agricultural use. Moderate to high quail populations and low to moderate levels of pheasant are found in the exotic forests and scrub margins of the forests. The lower pheasant population compared to the coastal exotic forests is probably the result of differences in the understory vegetation. Inkweed (*Phytolacca octandra*) is absent in the Taupo sub-region, as it is too frost sensitive to establish.

Most of the hydro lakes, with the exception of Lake Ohakuri, are steep sided with very small littoral zones. Waterfowl use of these areas is therefore limited. When Lake Ohakuri was

formed, it flooded a number of relatively gently sloping areas, resulting in substantial littoral zones. The Whirinaki Arm of the lake is a good example of one of these areas. These large littoral areas at Lake Ohakuri support moderate black swan and paradise shelduck populations. Paradise shelduck moult on the upper Whirinaki Arm. Unfortunately the combination of shallow water, nutrient rich run-off, and water level fluctuations creates ideal conditions for outbreaks of botulism, and large numbers of shelduck die in some years.

The dairy farming areas, particularly those in the Reporoa valley, provide good areas of habitat for dabbling duck, although productivity appears to be lower than might be expected. The drains in this area and the cut off meanders of the Waikato River provide quality nesting and brooding areas. There are a number of important wetlands in the Waikato sub-region, including Hardcastles lagoon and Rawhiti. Unfortunately many of the dabbling duck nesting areas are susceptible to large fluctuations in river levels, which may destroy nesting sites at some times of the year. Soil type and composition limits opportunities to develop wetlands in this area.

3.4 WHAKATANE

The Whakatane sub-region encompasses Kawerau, Whakatane, Murupara, and Opotiki. The steep, rugged country intersected by major valleys found in catchment headwaters is made up mainly of greywacke and argillite. This leads to wider alluvial valleys, rolling hills, and coastal plains in the lower sections of the rivers. The Kaingaroa ignimbrite plateau is another feature of the Whakatane sub-region, and is predominantly covered with plantation forestry. Te Urewera National Park also covers a large part of the Whakatane sub-region.

Many of the headwaters originate in native or exotic forest. Downstream land uses include intensive dairying and horticulture. Much of the agricultural cropping and dairy farming is on drained swampland. Lowland areas are highly modified and few natural watercourses remain unaffected by drainage and flood control schemes. There has been widespread drainage of the plains, resulting in the loss of 99% of wetland habitat. A number of the remaining wetlands are managed by Eastern Fish and Game Council, providing hunting opportunities for licence holders.

The Rangitaiki River system is the largest in the region. The ignimbrite plain in the western part of its catchment influences the hydrology of the river and its tributaries, which are not prone to severe flooding. The pumice substrate provides poor spawning habitat in many of the smaller streams. The greywacke hills of the eastern catchment have less stable tributaries but excellent spawning gravels. These tributaries contribute significantly to the Rangitaiki River fishery. There are three separate hydro electricity schemes on the Rangitaiki River system. Two dams on the mainstem have created Lake Aniwhenua and Lake Matahina, while a diversion scheme is located on the Wheao River.

In contrast, the rivers in the eastern part of the Whakatane sub-region are flood prone and subject to rapid changes in water levels. Higher summer water temperatures and low summer flows are other characteristics of these rivers. The Whakatane River, Waimana River, Waioeka River, Otara River, Waiotahi River, and Waikare River contain good natural spawning habitat and the upper catchments are largely in native forest.

3.4.1 SPORTS FISH

The trout fishery in the Eastern Bay of Plenty is characterised by a number of high quality river based fisheries. Both rainbow and brown trout are common in many streams, and in catchments such as the Rangitaiki they may grow to trophy size. Lake Aniwhenua and the Flaxy lakes are the primary still water fisheries in the Whakatane sub-region.

The Rangitaiki catchment contains both brown and rainbow trout. Trout density is high compared with most other river systems in the region. The formation of Lake Aniwhenua in 1975 created an excellent lake fishery. This wild fishery flourished and boomed in the mid 1990's with large numbers of trophy trout produced around that time. Since then the fish quality has reduced, and the catch is now dominated by high catch rates of smaller trout. The Wheo River was also affected by hydro development, creating the Wheo Canal and Flaxy lakes, which are popular summer fisheries. Unfortunately, summer access to these fisheries through Kaingaroa Forest has become very restricted due to forest fire risk.

Many of the tributaries of the Rangitaiki River are popular fisheries in themselves. The Horomanga River, Whirinaki River, Mangamako Stream, and Waihua Stream all contain excellent trout habitat.

The Tarawera River is another major waterway in the Whakatane sub-region. It is a stable lake-fed river, flowing from Lake Tarawera at the top of the catchment. The river can be divided into three distinct fisheries: above Tarawera Falls (including the Tarawera outlet), below the falls and above Kawerau, and below Kawerau. Rainbow trout predominate in the river. Exotic plantation forestry is the major land use in the upper part of the catchment. The lower Tarawera River receives relatively large quantities of industrial effluent, and these cause a marked deterioration in the quality of aquatic habitat.

The Whakatane, Waimana, Waiioeka, Otara, Waiotahi, and Waikare Rivers also support healthy trout fisheries. These rivers range from high quality headwater river fisheries originating from Te Urewera National Park, to modified lowland streams. These rivers can be subject to periodic high flood flows, and tend to contain variable trout numbers over time as a result. Many of these Eastern Bay of Plenty rivers are fished regularly by local anglers from the Whakatane and Opotiki districts. Good access, by road and foot, contributes to the significance of these fisheries.

Many of the fisheries in the Whakatane sub-region have low use relative to the quality of the angling experience they offer. Many of the rivers flow through areas of low to medium intensity farming. Water abstractions, gravel extraction, and agricultural effluent discharges are some of the issues that may threaten the Whakatane sub-region trout fisheries in the future. Industrial discharges and potential for future hydro-electricity schemes are other issues for Eastern Fish and Game Council to be aware of. Past efforts for hydro-electricity development have been declined on the basis of the high values, including significant angling values that the rivers offer. These high quality fisheries need high levels of protection, and the most appropriate way to achieve this is through habitat management and resource management advocacy.

3.4.2 GAME BIRDS

The Kaingaroa Ecological District is almost completely made up of exotic plantation forest, although there is a small amount of farm land between the Rangitaiki River and the Te Urewera foothills. This is predominantly used for dairy farming on the drained flood plain.

Kaingaroa Forest contains high quail and moderate pheasant populations. There is some evidence that suggests that quail populations are declining in the forest. Upland game numbers generally improve from south to north. Pheasant populations appear to have increased in the early 1990s, and this may be due to improved tree genetics resulting in lower tree stocking densities. This allows more grass and shrub development before canopy closure, thereby providing an improved food source for pheasant.

Waterfowl populations in the Kaingaroa area are limited. However, there is a substantial moult aggregation of paradise shelduck on upper Lake Aniwhenua. The dabbling duck in the upper river is predominantly the grey duck compared to predominantly mallard below Murupara. Lake Aniwhenua provides ideal waterfowl habitat and a very popular hunting area.

There are moderate numbers of game birds throughout the Whakatane sub-region river and lake margins. As in the Tauranga sub-region, a large percentage of the original wetland habitat has been drained as the land has been developed for agricultural production. In the past, the lowland areas of the Eastern Bay of Plenty contained vast wetlands. In recent years the land has been significantly altered and pastoral farming and a network of artificial drainage canals now dominate the landscape.

Remnant wetlands in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, such as Awaiti Wildlife Management Reserve and Tumurau Lagoon, are important habitat for game birds. Eastern Fish and Game Council manages a number of reserves in the Whakatane sub-region for the benefit of waterfowl and hunters. Ohiwa Harbour, Matata Lagoon, Maketu estuary, and Little Waihi are important coastal habitats for waterfowl. The partial loss of Matata Lagoon in a debris flow has had a significant localised impact on game bird habitat. Maketu and Little Waihi are both popular during the hunting season. To offset the historical loss of waterfowl habitat in the Whakatane sub-region, wetlands on private property will need to be encouraged. Pond development in the lower foothills may favour paradise shelduck rather than the dabbling ducks.

Good pheasant numbers are present along the coastal margin in the Whakatane sub-region. Although there is a high potential for pheasant hunting along the coastal strip, the resource is not as well known, or as close to larger population centres, as Tauranga pheasant hunting and is currently under utilised. Management of the Western Whakatane Coastal Recreation Reserve by Whakatane District Council has degraded both the pheasant habitat and also hunting opportunities.

3.5 GISBORNE

The Raukumara Range divides the Gisborne sub-region, with the topography and geology of the eastern side differing from that in the west. The differences are reflected in the habitat availability for sports fish and game birds. The western side of the sub-region contains very steep rugged country, incised by rivers. Narrow coastal terraces and cliffed coastlines are

features of the western part of this area. On the eastern side, coastal lowlands and hills provide a more gradual increase in elevation to the ranges. The mudstone-siltstone hill country on the eastern side is particularly unstable, and prone to a soil slip, earthflow, and other forms of mass movement erosion.

The climate in the Gisborne sub-region affects sports fish and game bird habitat availability. Generally very warm summers, dry north-west winds, periods of extended drought, and infrequent but severe storms, are features of the weather patterns. The low rainfall and warm temperatures mean that many waterways are too warm in the summer to support trout populations, while heavy rainfall events cause large quantities of sediment to enter many of the East Coast waterways. In addition, wetlands are prone to drying out, and are also affected by large sediment inputs during heavy rainfall. A large number of stock ponds seem underutilised by waterfowl.

3.5.1 SPORTS FISH

Trout habitat in the Gisborne sub-region is limited. High summer water temperatures and low flow levels appear to be the major limitation for trout populations. High sediment loads in many of the waterways also make them marginal as trout habitat. Both brown and rainbow trout are found in the Gisborne sub-region. A number of river systems on the East Cape, for example the Mata and Waiapu Rivers, only support trout in their headwaters due to high sediment levels and summer water temperatures in their lower reaches. There is only one still water fishery in the sub-region.

The Motu River is protected by a Water Conservation Order in its mid reaches, where it is surrounded by indigenous forests, but it is unusual because the land in the upper reaches has been modified for agricultural development. The fishery in the Motu is valued for the quality brown trout, and two of its major tributaries, the Takaputahi and Waitangirua streams, also support brown trout fisheries and are very highly rated by some anglers.

The Hangaroa River catchment has undergone extensive development for pastoral farming, and major soil erosion is a problem in the catchment. The headwaters maintain good trout numbers, although downstream areas may be marginal as trout habitat. Large slips in the headwaters of the Hangaroa often have a major impact on the trout fishery.

Kent's Lake, one of the Tiniroto lakes, is a small lake that is annually stocked with hatchery reared rainbow trout. The lake can become eutrophic, which combined with high summer water temperatures, can lead to marginal trout habitat. A lot of enhancement work has been carried out to address the problem of eutrophication. Water quality in Kent's Lake has recently improved due to planting of the lake catchment. Kent's Lake produces trout between 2-3 kilograms.

Widespread establishment of exotic plantation forest may improve some of the aquatic habitat in the future as catchments become more stable. Improvements have already occurred in catchments such as the Kopuawhara. Increased exotic forestry may have some negative effects too, such as exacerbating the demand for water resources. Without major changes in land use in

the river catchments, there is probably little scope for enhancement of the trout fisheries of the Gisborne sub-region.

The fisheries in the Gisborne sub-region are predominantly fished by local anglers. Pockets of suitable trout habitat lead to isolated populations of trout which are pursued by a small group of enthusiastic anglers. The Motu River attracts a number of national and international visitors, and fishing effort on the Motu River makes up over half the angler effort for the sub-region. The Gisborne sub-region is made up of a mainly rural population with small isolated urban areas. Large stations dominate the hill country, with the flats dominated by intensive horticultural land use. The area is relatively isolated from the rest of the Eastern Fish and Game Region, and much of the land is privately owned.

3.5.2 GAME BIRDS

The coastal areas of the Motu Ecological District are mainly in agricultural use, and the hill country is predominantly made up of hill country sheep and beef farms. Inland, the Raukumara Range is primarily native bush, with regenerating bush on the edges of the forest.

Game birds are poorly represented in the western part of the sub-region, with only sparse populations of quail, dabbling duck, and black swan. There are good numbers of pheasant in the coastal areas, and low level quail populations. Dabbling duck populations tend to fluctuate markedly within the sub-region.

Paradise shelduck populations are also quite variable within the sub-region. It appears that the number of stock ponds available for the birds to use is important in maintaining the population. Those areas with significant pond development and other wetlands support higher paradise shelduck populations than areas with few farm ponds.

The eastern side of the East Cape has a much greater foothill area than the west. These foothills provide a wider range of habitats and therefore a wider range of game birds.

The quail populations occur in relatively small numbers, based on a series of isolated areas of suitable habitat. The primary habitat is exotic plantation forestry and areas of regenerating scrub. Pheasants are present over almost all of the eastern side of the Gisborne sub-region. The majority of birds inhabit the foot hills inland from the coastal plains. Large numbers of birds are also found in the cropping and horticultural areas where they take advantage of the additional supply of food items such as annual weeds. Maize and vineyard shelterbelts are both important habitats for pheasant. Sheep and cattle farming areas contain good numbers of pheasant, where they take advantage of scrub and regenerating native vegetation for food and cover. Much of the East Cape has been planted in forestry in recent years, which appears to have benefited pheasant numbers.

Rough river margins are an important habitat for both quail and pheasant in the Gisborne sub-region. The lowland river margins of the Waipaoa and Te Arai Rivers, in particular, provide some of the best pheasant habitat and hunting opportunities in the area.

Moderate to high duck and paradise shelduck populations are present over much of the eastern side of the Gisborne sub-region. As on the western side of the Raukumara Range, populations

are often dependent on farm ponds. Black swan are widespread, but are limited by the size of available water bodies. Numerous ponds throughout the sub-region have a pair of swan on them, and the few larger water bodies such as Lake Repongaere support good numbers of black swan. Waterfowl populations are very susceptible to dry spring and summer conditions, and the lack of water may result in low populations the following hunting season.

3.6 WAIROA

All of the waters within the Wairoa sub-region are part of the Wairoa River catchment. The underlying geology is made up mainly of siltstone and sandstone, which is unstable where vegetative cover has been removed. Much of the Wairoa sub-region is covered by Te Urewera National Park, the largest remaining indigenous forest in the North Island. The park's protected status and retention of vegetation means that waterways in this part of the Wairoa sub-region provide high quality habitat. The hill country in the rest of the sub-region is largely farmed, and is susceptible to soil slip and mass movement erosion. Relatively large quantities of sediment are carried in the waterways after rainfall events, reducing the quality of aquatic habitat in the lower reaches of rivers.

The coastal shelf has created gently sloping coastal margins that abut the steeper country inland. A network of coastal lagoons along the Wairoa coast is a feature of the lowland areas.

3.6.1 SPORTS FISH

The high altitude wilderness area within Te Urewera National park provides good trout habitat for both river and lake fisheries. As a result, the Wairoa sub-region has some very high quality wilderness river fisheries and isolated lake fisheries. Both brown and rainbow trout are common throughout the catchment, and medium sized fish are predominant. The upper Ruakituri River, Lake Kaitawa, and Lake Whakamarino are exceptions, as these water bodies produce very large trout.

As waterways approach lowland areas they flow through low intensity agricultural areas. Habitat deteriorates in these lowland areas as water quality decreases. Hydro-electric power generation affects several major water bodies, and erosion in developed land areas influences river fisheries.

Lake Waikaremoana and Lake Waikareiti lie within Te Urewera National Park. In 1946 Lake Waikaremoana was developed for hydro-electric power generation. The lake level was lowered 5 metres, and the lake has since been subject to a modified lake level management regime. Between 1995 and 1998 Eastern Fish and Game Council was involved in lengthy discussions and consultation with Electricity Corporation of New Zealand as part of the resource consent application process for the hydro scheme. With the scheme transferring to Genesis Energy and being re-consented in 1998, the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Fund was created to enhance sports fish habitat and angler opportunity in the Wairoa Catchment.

Lake Waikaremoana is a wild fishery, containing both brown and rainbow trout. The shoreline brown trout fishery is highly regarded internationally due to the wilderness experience and the quality of the brown trout available to the angler. The brown trout fishery is based largely on mature fish cruising the shallows around the shoreline, with anglers stalking them while fly fishing from the shore.

Boat fishing for rainbow trout is also very popular on Lake Waikaremoana. Again the wilderness nature of the lake and the relatively high catch rate provide a valued experience for anglers.

Lake Waikareiti is a wild rainbow trout fishery. There have been no hatchery liberations for over 40 years. In terms of development, Lake Waikareiti is the closest to its natural state of any lake in the North Island. There is one in-flowing tributary stream that provides sufficient spawning habitat to enable the trout population to be self-sustaining.

Lake Kaitawa and Lake Whakamarino are part of the Waikaremoana power scheme, and receive annual liberations of hatchery reared rainbow trout. Very large brown large trout, up to 12.5 kilograms, caught in Lake Whakamarino have earned the lake a reputation as a trophy fishery.

The upper Waiau River is a truly wilderness rainbow and brown trout river fishery. Access is demanding, but there are adequate tracks and huts for anglers. High numbers of medium sized rainbow trout are a feature of the river.

The Ruakituri River is one of the most highly valued trout fishing rivers in New Zealand. Bedrock and large boulders provide stability to the stream bed. The headwater catchment is in native forest within Te Urewera National Park. Below the Waitangi Falls there are good populations of large brown and rainbow trout. Only rainbow trout inhabit the river above the falls. The upper Ruakituri River is renowned as a trophy fishery, with trout reaching sizes of over 7 kilograms. The trophy trout are generally older fish. A lower bag limit and both an upper and lower size limit is in place on the upper Ruakituri River to conserve this valuable resource.

Other Wairoa River tributaries, such as the Mangapoike, Makeratu, and Mangaone, are marginal trout habitat and attract relatively little angling. The Waikaretaheke River is subject to flow fluctuations due to the operation of the Waikaremoana hydro-electricity scheme. Trout habitat in the river is also influenced by agricultural development and extensive willow growth restricts angler access to many reaches of the river.

There are three additional small lakes within the Wairoa sub-region that contain trout. These are Lake Kiriopukae (near Lake Waikaremoana), Lake Rotoroa, and Lake Rotonuiaha (in the Putere area and commonly known as Putere Lake).

The Wairoa sub-region has a low population density and attracts a high relative use by visiting anglers. Both Lakes Waikaremoana and Waikareiti are of national importance, and a large number of anglers from both New Zealand and overseas visit during the summer. Increasing visitor numbers have led to periods of high intensity use at Lake Waikaremoana, and this trend is likely to increase throughout the sub-region.

There is restricted access to many good angling areas on rivers in the Wairoa sub-region. Due to the protected status of the National park, a large percentage of the aquatic habitat is protected from physical development or changes in land use. Local Iwi have significant land interests in some parts of the sub-region.

3.6.2 GAME BIRDS

The quail and pheasant populations in the Wairoa sub-region are similar to areas further north. Quail numbers are low and populations are generally isolated where there is suitable habitat. Pheasants are present in moderate to high populations, especially in cropping or horticultural situations. The numbers of upland game present on the Wairoa coastal strip appears to have declined in recent years. The decline may be a reflection of increased grazing intensity and development of pasture. Changes in land use towards increasing areas of exotic plantation forestry in the future may provide additional habitat for upland game birds in the Wairoa sub-region.

There is limited waterfowl habitat in the Wairoa sub-region. Very few wetland areas exist, although there are some important coastal lagoons and Whakaki lagoon is a significant area of wetland habitat. There are a large number of ponds in the Wairoa area, but most provide poor waterfowl habitat due to their use as a source of water for stock. Many dry out during the dry summers characteristic of the east coast.

Whakaki Lagoon is the most significant coastal lagoon in the Hawke's Bay. It is also the largest coastal lagoon between Lake Onoke (Wairarapa Wetlands) and Ohiwa Harbour (Whakatane). It is part of a network of smaller lagoons: Patangata, Te Paeroa, Wairau, and Ohuia. Whakaki Lagoon provides very high value waterfowl habitat and excellent hunting opportunities. A recent collapse in the Whakaki macrophyte beds has shown a corresponding decline in waterfowl numbers.

While populations of paradise shelduck and dabbling duck are relatively stable at a moderate level inland, the populations have fallen on the coastal lagoons. There has been a similar decrease in numbers of black swan.

Game birds are infrequent in that part of the Wairoa sub-region that is in Te Urewera National Park. Lake Waikaremoana and Lake Whakamarino both support a significant population of black swan. There are also paradise shelduck on Lake Waikaremoana, which is an important moult site for the species.

4. ANGLERS AND HUNTERS

Sports fishing and game bird hunting are extremely popular recreational activities in the Eastern Fish and Game Region. More than 18,000 sports fishing licences and over 3,800 game hunting licences were sold during the 2011-2012 season.⁴² Every seven years Fish & Game New Zealand conduct a nationwide survey of freshwater angler use and the results from the most recent 2007-2008 National Angler Survey estimated more than 215,600 angler days were spent trout fishing in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.⁴³ Angler use in the region has declined by approximately 10% from the first National Angler Survey completed in 1996-1997, and proportionately more effort is now expended on the Rotorua lakes fisheries.

Sports fish licence sales contribute 81% of total licence income to the Eastern Fish and Game Council. An increasing percentage of anglers who fish waters in the Eastern Fish and Game Region reside outside the region. In 2000 approximately 40% of Eastern Fish and Game Council licence holders resided outside the region yet now approximately 60% do, being 45% domestic residents and 15% international residents. The Eastern Fish and Game Council resident licence holders fish over 90% of their time in the region and over 33% of all Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Council licence holder's fishing occurs in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.⁴⁴

Compared to other Fish and Game Councils, the Eastern Fish and Game Council also sells a high percentage of short term licences. This reflects the high number of visitors to the region, particularly the Rotorua lakes fishery. The proximity of many of the most significant fisheries to large population centres is another factor contributing to the high number of short term licence sales. With Auckland being only 2-3 hours travel by road from the Rotorua lakes there is potential for increased participation by Auckland residents in the future.

Another feature of Eastern Fish and Game Council licence holders is the large proportion of Rotorua residents who participate in sports fish angling. Between 10% and 15% of Rotorua residents purchase sports fishing licences during a typical season. This reflects the high quality and easy accessibility of the Rotorua lakes fishery. It also means that the general public has a high appreciation of the value of the fishery.

Most Eastern Fish and Game Council game bird hunting licence holders reside in the region. Whole season licences make up the largest proportion of game bird licence sales, as most participants hunt on Opening Weekend and require a whole season licence to do so. Given the high quality of opportunities such as the pheasant populations, and the high numbers of game bird licences sold in the past, there is a lot of potential to increase participation in game bird hunting in the future.

⁴² Eastern Region Fish and Game Council 2011-2012 Annual Report.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Unwin, M. 2009. Angler usage of lake and river fisheries managed by Fish & Game New Zealand: results from the 2007/08 National Angling Survey. NIWA Client Report: CHC2009-046.

5. EASTERN FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

5.1 NGONGOTAHA HATCHERY

The main office for the Eastern Fish and Game Council is located at Paradise Valley Road, Ngongotaha. The Council, pursuant to section 52 of the Public Works Act 1981, has had vested in it (for sports fish and game management purposes) by the Crown 15.5551 hectares of land, which includes the Ngongotaha hatchery facility (NZ Gazette No. 30, 1992).

The hatchery is an integral part of sports fish management in the Eastern Fish and Game Region. It is the largest trout hatchery in New Zealand, and supplies trout and char for release to both within the region and also to a number of other regional Fish and Game Councils. The hatchery complex includes:

- Main hatchery building,
- Hatchery workshop,
- Tractor shed,
- Octagon, used for kids' Fishing Days, training facilities, and functions,
- Toilet block,
- Staff quarters,
- Water supply from spring,
- A number of outdoor ponds for fish rearing and display.

Other buildings at the Ngongotaha site include:

- Administration building,
- Garage complex,
- Two aviary facilities,
- Two houses.

A portion of the garage complex is used by Department of Conservation as a fire fighting facility. The main concrete aviary is a shared asset between Eastern Fish and Game Council and the Department of Conservation. There is a formal agreement between the Council and Department of Conservation regarding the shared garage complex and shared aviary. A separate aviary on the Ngongotaha property is owned by Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust.

Eastern Fish and Game Council also owns some off-site assets:

- Trap house and storage facility at Ngongotaha Stream,
- Storage building (Kaituna Wildlife management Reserve),
- Boat shed (Lake Tarawera),
- Hut (Wairua, Lake Tarawera),
- Hut, lab, and garage (Lake Waikaremoana).

5.2 STAFF

Between 10 and 12 full-time staff, including the Regional Manager, are based at the Rotorua Office. Staff carry out projects under each of the nine operational work areas according to individual skills and experience.

PART FIVE

INTERPRETATION AND RELEVANT LEGISLATION

1. INTERPRETATION

New Zealand Fish and Game Council refers to the Fish and Game Council which is responsible for managing sports fish and game birds nationally, including staff and Council members. The New Zealand Fish and Game Council members comprise of one representative from each of the twelve regional Fish and Game Councils.

Eastern Fish and Game Council refers to the regional Fish and Game Council which is responsible for managing sports fish and game birds in the Eastern Fish and Game Region, including staff and Council members.

Eastern Fish and Game Region refers to the geographical area that the Eastern Fish and Game Council is responsible for. The area is described in the N.Z. Gazette, 24 May 1990, No. 83, p. 1861.

Fish & Game New Zealand refers to the national Fish and Game organisation as a collective, and includes the New Zealand Fish and Game Council along with the twelve regional Fish and Game Councils.

The Council refers to the elected members of the Eastern Fish and Game Council as the governing body.

Fish and Game Councils refers to the 12 regional Fish and Game Councils, as distinct from the New Zealand Fish and Game Council.

Game birds are those species listed as such in the First Schedule of the Wildlife Act 1953.⁴⁵

Sports fish are those species listed as acclimatised fish in the First Schedule of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations (1983).⁴⁶

Regulations refers to all rules and conditions for sports fish angling and game bird hunting. Fish and Game New Zealand recommends conditions to the Minister of Conservation, as advertised in the game season Gazette and the Anglers Notice. The term “regulations” has been used to encapsulate all relevant rules and conditions.

⁴⁵ See Appendix 4A for a full list of game bird species, supra at 111.

⁴⁶ See Appendix 4B for a full list of sports fish species, supra at 112.

2. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Fish and Game Councils operate under two principle acts – the Conservation Act 1987 and the Wildlife Act 1953 – and within a number of other statutes.

- **CONSERVATION ACT 1987**

Fish and Game Councils are established under the Conservation Act 1987, which contains the legal authority for Councils to manage the country's sports fish and game bird resource. The Act also contains provisions that are relevant to public access, controls on fish and game recreation, preparation of management plans, and the requirement for Fish and Game Councils to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Conservation Act 1987 also details the functions of the Department of Conservation. Anglers Notices are promulgated under this Act.

The Conservation General Policy was approved by the Minister of Conservation in 2005 under section 17C of this Act and provides guidance for Fish and Game Councils to use in the management of sports fish and game.

- **FRESHWATER FISHERIES REGULATIONS 1983**

The Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 are made under the Conservation Act 1987. These Regulations provide for controls on licencing, controls on fish tagging, use of electric fishing machines, protection of fish passage, regulating the transfer of fish and the management of indigenous and noxious fish species.

- **FISH AND GAME COUNCIL ELECTIONS REGULATIONS 1990**

These regulations are made under the Conservation Act 1987 and prescribe the procedure for the election of members of regional Fish and Game Councils and the appointment by such Councils of members to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council.

- **WILDLIFE ACT 1953**

The Wildlife Act 1953 establishes how the legal authority to manage sports fish and game birds can be exercised. It establishes the right to control hunting through a licensing process, designates those species that are considered game birds, designates powers of Fish and Game warranted officers for the purposes of this Act, and sets out penalties for offences. Hunting conditions notified in the open season for game are promulgated under this Act.

- **WILDLIFE REGULATIONS 1955**

These Wildlife Regulations 1955 are made under the Wildlife Act 1953. Amongst other matters, they provide for game bird hunting licences, hunting methods and game bird liberations.

- **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991**

The Resource Management Act 1991 ("RMA") provides for the management of New Zealand's natural and physical resources, including sports fish and game bird habitats, access to waterways and their margins, and wilderness, natural character, and recreational values. Regional and

territorial authorities must follow processes set out in the Act for the making of development decisions, and it allows for Fish and Game Councils and other parties to have input into such processes. Fish and Game Councils are bound by the provisions of the RMA, regional policy statements and regional and district plans. The RMA also requires regional and territorial authorities to have regard to other statutory management plans and strategies, such as Sports Fish and Game Management Plans, when preparing or reviewing planning documents.

- **BIOSECURITY ACT 1993**

The Biosecurity Act 1993 includes provisions on the treatment of animals, which Fish and Game Councils must follow in their operations. Fish and Game Councils must also obtain approval under this Act before new species of sports fish or game birds are introduced to the country. It also includes provisions to prevent the arrival of new pests and diseases, and for the management, control or eradication of those already present.

Eastern Fish and Game Council has worked closely with Biosecurity New Zealand and the Ministry for Primary Industries on the monitoring and management of various pest species and organisms.

- **RESERVES ACT 1977**

The Reserves Act 1977 provides for the acquisition of land for reserves, and for the creation, classification and management of reserves. Reserves may be administered by the Department of Conservation or by other ministers, boards, trustees, local authorities, societies or other organisations appointed to control and manage the reserve, or in whom reserves are vested. Under Section 2 of the Reserves Act 1977, Fish and Game Councils have been appointed to be local authorities for the purposes of the Act, enabling them to exercise relevant powers and functions.

Eastern Fish and Game Council has authority to manage or co-manage a large number of reserves in the Eastern Fish and Game Region.

- **LOCAL BODIES OFFICIAL INFORMATION AND MEETINGS ACT 1987**

Eastern Fish and Game Council is subject to the provisions of the Local Bodies Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. Its meetings are open to the public and must be advertised. Unless certain criteria defined in the Act have been met, all meetings must also be transacted openly.

- **CROWN ENTITY ACT 2004, PUBLIC FINANCE ACT 1989 AND PUBLIC AUDIT ACT 2001**

Fish and Game Councils are subject to the provisions of the Crown Entity Act 2004, the Public Finance Act 1989 and the Public Audit Act 2001. Councils must be audited annually by the Audit Office, and provide an annual report including a statement of objectives and a comparative statement of service performance. The report must be presented to a publically

advertised annual general meeting and to parliament. Councils are defined as Public Entities in terms of these Acts.

3. NOTIFYING THE PLAN

The procedure for preparing and gaining approval of sports fish and game bird management plans is set out in section 17M of the Conservation Act 1987. In summary it requires a regional Fish and Game Council to:

Publish a notice of the draft plan in the newspaper.

Give notice of the draft plan to:

- the Director-General,
- representatives of the appropriate Iwi authorities,
- regional councils and territorial authorities.

Give such further notice of the plan as the regional Fish and Game Council thinks fit.

Invite persons or organisations to send to the regional Fish and Game Council written submissions on the proposal before a date not less than 40 working days after the publication of the notice.

Consult with such other persons or organisations, in such manner, as the regional Fish and Game Council considers practicable and appropriate.

Give full consideration to any submissions and opinions made known to the regional Fish and Game Council.

It also requires:

Every notice to state that the draft plan is available for inspection at the places and times specified in the notice.

From the date of public notification until public opinion has been made known to the regional Fish and Game Council, the draft plan is to be made available for public inspection during normal office hours and in such places and quantities as are likely to encourage public participation.

The regional Fish and Game Council to give every person or organisation in making any submission a chance to be heard in support of the submission.

The regional Fish and Game Council to prepare a summary of the submissions received on the draft.

The regional Fish and Game Council to send the draft to the Minister with the summary of the submissions and a written statement of any matters of content on which the Director-General and the Council are unable to agree.

The Minister shall approve the draft or send it back to the regional Fish and Game Council for further consideration before approval.

APPENDIX 1

SIGNIFICANT SPORTS FISH AND GAME BIRD HABITATS IN THE EASTERN FISH AND GAME REGION

ROTORUA SUB-REGION

Lake Rotorua	Lake Rotoiti
Lake Okataina	Lake Tarawera
Lake Okareka	Lake Rotoehu
Lake Rotoma	Lake Rotokakahi
Lake Rotomahana	Lake Tikitapu
Lake Okaro	Lake Ngahewa
Lake Ngapouri	Lake Rerewhakaaitu
Kaharoa/Mamaku lagoons	Rotoehu forest
Kapenga wetland (lease)	Earthquake Flat (Waikite) WMR
Lake Tutaeinanga WMR	Orotu WMR (proposed)
Lake Rotokawa	Tributaries of all the above
Tributaries and margins of all the above	
Wetland associations of all the above	

TAURANGA SUB-REGION

Wairoa River	Lake McLaren
Ruahiri Canal	Opuaki River
Waimapu River	Ngamuwahine River
Pongakawa River	Waitahanui River
Tuapiro Creek	Wainui River
Kaituna River	Mangorewa Stream
Tauranga Harbour	Kaituna WMR
Coastal dunes and coastal margins	Little Waihi estuary
Waewaetutuki 8B block	Maketu estuary
Tributaries and margins of all the above	
Wetland associations of all the above	

TAUPO SUB-REGION

Lake Taupo	Waikato River
Lake Aratiatia	Lake Ohakuri
Lake Atiamuri	Lake Maraetai
Lake Ohakuri	Tahunaatara River
Waireiki Stream	Pueto Stream
Kaiwhitiwhiti Stream	Torepatutahi Stream
Lake Kurutau	Lake Rotoaira
Lake Otamangakau	Kurutau moulting ponds
Hinemaiaia River and impoundments	Lake Pouarua

Hardcastles lagoon
Ohaaki wetland
Tributaries and margins of all the above
Wetland associations of all the above

Rawhiti lagoon

WHAKATANE SUB-REGION

Rangitaiki River
Lake Matahina
Wheao Canal
Whirinaki River
Waihua Stream
Whakatane River
Waioeka River
Waiotahi River
Koranga Stream
Awaiti WMR
Ohiwa Harbour
Awakaponga WMR
Fort Galatea WMR
Orini WMR
Thornton lagoon WMR
Tributaries and margins of all the above
Wetland associations of all the above

Lake Aniwhenua
Wheao River
Horomanga River
Mangamako Stream
Tarawera River
Waimana River
Otara River
Waikare River
Kaingaroa Forest
Tumurau lagoon
Matata lagoon
Lake Tamurenui WMR
Bregmans WMR
Tarawera Cut WMR
Whakatane coastal margin

GISBORNE SUB-REGION

Motu River
Waitangirua Stream
Waiapu River
Hangaroa River
Lake Repongaere
Mangawhio Lagoon
Tributaries and margins of all the above
Wetland associations of all the above

Takaputahi Stream
Mata River
Waipaoa River
Te Arai River
Tiniroto Lakes
Uawa River

WAIROA SUB-REGION

Lake Waikaremoana
Lake Waikareiti
Ruakituri River
Waikaretaheke River
Lake Rotoroa
Patangata lagoon
Wairau lagoon
Whakamahi lagoon
Tributaries and margins of all the above
Wetland associations of all the above

Lake Kaitawa
Lake Whakamarino
Waiiau River
Lake Kiriopukae
Whakaki lagoon
Korito lagoon
Ohuia lagoon
Ngamotu lagoon

APPENDIX 2

LAND MANAGED BY EASTERN FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Reserve	Eastern Fish and Game Council Role	Other Co-Management Organisations	Gazette Notice
Awahou Anglers' Carpark Reserve	Vested in and administer		1993/3617
Awakaponga Wildlife Management Reserve (WMR)	Appointment to control and manage		1993
Awaiti WMR	Day to day management agreement	Department of Conservation (DOC) administers	1998
Bregmans WMR	Appointment to control and manage southern part	DOC administers northern part	1994
Earthquake Flat (Waikite) WMR	Manage game bird hunting	DOC administers	
Fort Galatea WMR	Appointment to control and manage		1993
Hardcastles Lagoon	Manage game bird hunting	Mighty River Power control and manage	
Hauparu Bay Angler' Carpark	Vested in and administer		1993/3617
Kaituna WMR	Day to day management agreement	DOC administers part	1993
Kapenga Wetland	Manage game bird hunting	Kapenga M Trust own land, leased to DOC	
Lake Ngapouri WMR	Appointment to control and manage	Te Arawa Lakes Trust owns lake bed	1993
Tamurenu Lake WMR	Day to day management agreement	DOC administers	
Lake Tutaeinanga WMR	Appointment to control and manage	Te Arawa Lakes Trust owns lake bed	1993
Matuku WMR	Appointment to control and manage		1993
Mangawhio wetland	Day to day management agreement	DOC administers	
Ngongotaha Fish Breeding Trap	Eastern Fish and Game Council administer for the purpose of fish breeding (held under the Public Works Act)		1992

Reserve	Eastern Fish and Game Council Role	Other Co-Management Organisations	Gazette Notice
Ngongotaha Hatchery Site	Vested in Eastern Fish and Game Council under Public Works Act for fish and game management purposes	Eastern Fish and Game Council /DOC agreement provides for DOC use of parts of site	1992
Orotu wetland	Manage game bird hunting	DOC administers	
Rawhiti Lagoon	Manage ballots/hunting	Mighty River Power control and manage	
Thornton lagoon WMR	Appointment to control and manage part	DOC day to day management agreement	1994
Waimapu River Reserve	Vested in and administer		1913/8
Waewaetutuki 8B block	Land owned in fee simple		
Lake Waikaremoana	Licence to occupy	Te Urewera National Park Administered by DOC	
Orini WMR	Appointment to control and manage		1993
Ohaaki Wetland	Day to day management agreement	Landowner – Contact Energy Ltd	
SF70	Manage game bird hunting	DOC administers	
Aratiatia Rapids	Manage game bird hunting	DOC administers	
Western Whakatane Coastal Recreation Reserve	Manage game bird hunting	Whakatane District Council administers	

APPENDIX 3

IWI ROHE (TRIBAL AREAS) OVERLAPPING THE EASTERN FISH AND GAME REGION

Source. Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry of Māori Development, <http://www.tkm.govt.nz/map/>

TAINUI

Waikato

Ngāti Maniapoto

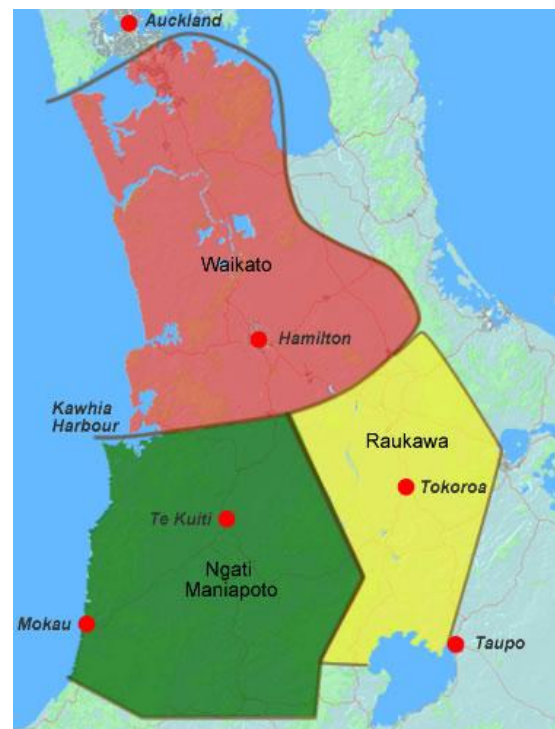
Raukawa

Ngāti Korokī Kahukura

Ngāti Hauā

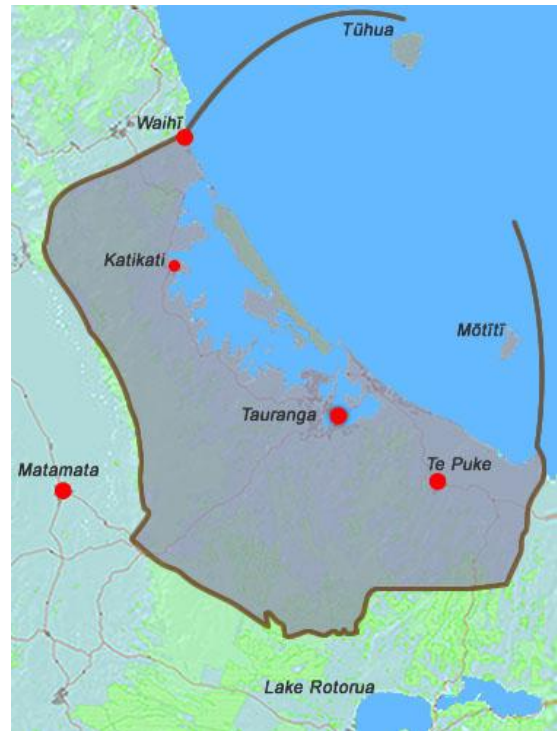
Pouākani

Rereahu



TAURANGA MOANA

Ngāti Pūkenga
Ngāi Te Rangi
Ngāti Ranginui

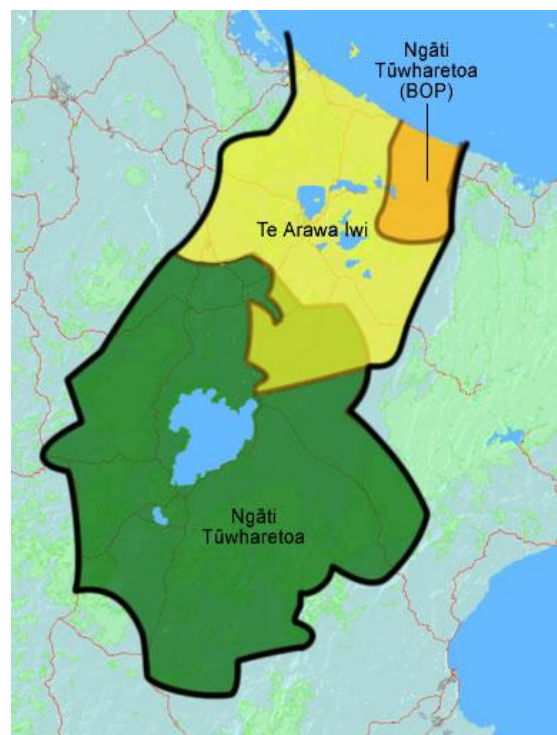


TE ARAWA WAKA

Ngāti Tūwharetoa
Ngāti Turangitukua
Ngāti Tūwharetoa (Bay of Plenty)

TE ARAWA IWI

Ngāti Mākino
Ngāti Pīkiao
Ngāti Rangiteaorere
Tapuika
Ngāti Tarāwhai
Tūhourangi
Te Ure o Uenukukōpako / Ngāti Whakaue
Waitaha
Ngāti Tahu / Ngāti Whaoa
Ngāti Kearoa / Ngāti Tuarā
Ngāti Rongomai
Ngāti Rangiwewehi
Ngāti Rangitīhi



MĀTAATUA

Ngāti Awa

Ngāti Manawa

Ngāti Whare

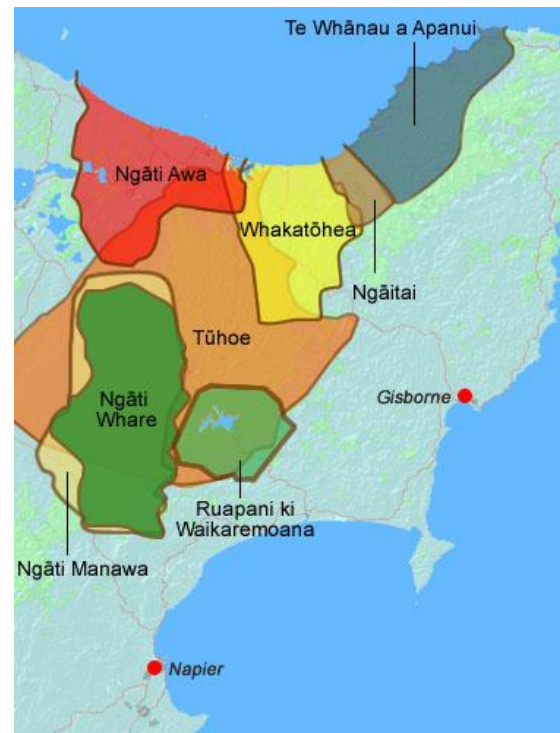
Ngāitai (Bay of Plenty)

Whakatōhea

Te Whānau a Apanui

Tūhoe

Ruapani ki Waikaremoana



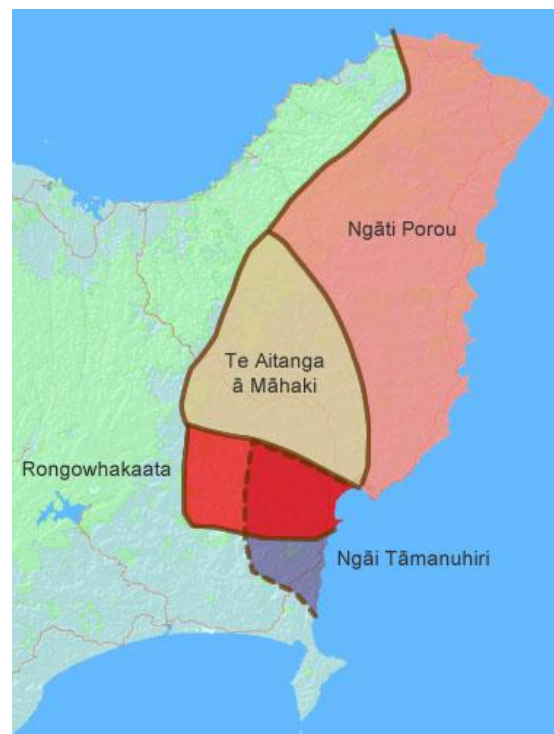
TE TAI RĀWHITI

Ngāti Porou

Te Aitanga ā Māhaki

Rongowhakaata

Ngāi Tāmanuhiri



TĀKITIMU

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Te Wairoa

Ngāti Pāhauwera

Ngāti Hineuru

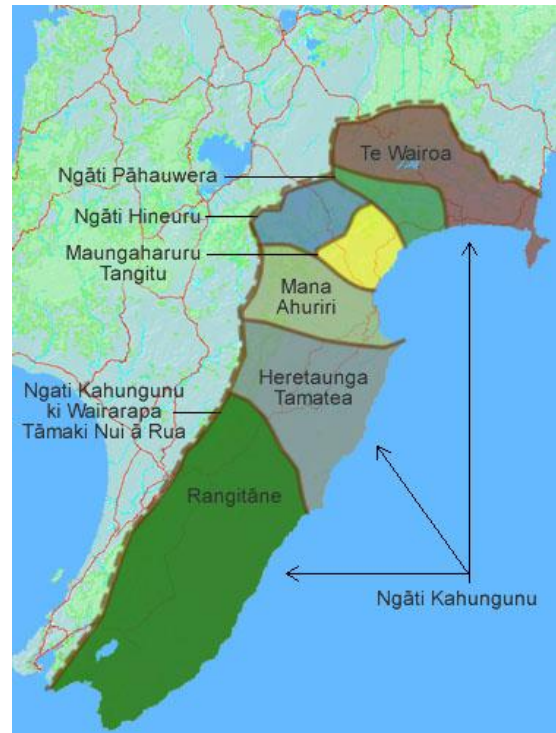
Maungaharuru Tangitu

Mana Ahuriri

Heretaunga Tamatea

Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa-Tāmaki Nui ā
Rua

Rangitāne (North Island)



APPENDIX 4

SCHEDULE OF SPORTS FISH AND GAME BIRD SPECIES

4A – GAME BIRD SPECIES

Wildlife Act 1953

Schedule 1

Wildlife declared to be game

- Black swan (*Cygnus atratus*) (except on Chatham Islands)
- Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*) (except on Chatham Islands)
- Duck—
 - Australasian shoveler (*Anas rhynchos*)
 - Grey duck (*Anas superciliosa*) and any cross of that species with any other species, variety, or kind of duck (except on Chatham Islands)
 - Mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and any cross of that species with any other species, variety, or kind of duck (except on Chatham Islands)
 - Paradise shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*)
- Partridge—
 - Grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*) (except on Chatham Islands)
 - Red-legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa rufa*) (except on Chatham Islands)
- Pheasant—
 - any bird, not being a domestic bird, of the genus *Phasianus* and any cross of any such bird with any other species, variety, or kind of pheasant (except on Chatham Islands)
- Pukeko (*Porphyrio melanotus*) (except on Chatham Islands)
- Quail—
 - Bobwhite quail (*Colinus virginianus*) (except on Chatham Islands)
 - Brown quail (*Coturnix ypsilophora*) (except on Chatham Islands)
 - California quail (*Callipepla californica*) (except on Chatham Islands)

4B – SPORTS FISH SPECIES

Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983

Schedule 1

For the purposes of the Act and these regulations, **sports fish** means—

- (a) Brown trout (*Salmo trutta*)
- (b) Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*, formerly known as *Salmo gairdneri*)
- (c) American brook trout or char (*Salvelinus fontinalis*)
- (d) Lake trout or char (*Salvelinus namaycush*)
- (e) Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*)
- (f) Quinnat or chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)
- (g) Sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*)
- (h) Perch (*Perca fluviatilis*)
- (i) Tench (*Tinca tinca*)
- (j) Rudd (*Scardinius erythrophthalmus*) found or taken in the Auckland Acclimatisation District—

and includes any hybrid and the young, fry, ova, and spawn, and any part of any such fish; but does not include salmon preserved in cans and imported into New Zealand.

APPENDIX 5

EXTRACT FROM THE CONSERVATION ACT 1987

CONSERVATION ACT 1987

Part 5A Sports Fish and Game Councils

New Zealand Fish and Game Council

26Q FUNCTIONS OF FISH AND GAME COUNCILS

- (1) The functions of each Fish and Game Council shall be to manage, maintain, and enhance the sports fish and game resource in the recreational interests of anglers and hunters, and, in particular,—
 - (a) to assess and monitor—
 - (i) sports fish and game populations; and
 - (ii) the success rate and degree of satisfaction of users of the sports fish and game resource; and
 - (iii) the condition and trend of ecosystems as habitats for sports fish and game:
 - (b) to maintain and improve the sports fish and game resource—
 - (i) by maintaining and improving access; and
 - (ii) by maintaining the hatchery and breeding programmes, where required for stocking or restocking the sports fisheries and game habitat; and
 - (iii) by formulating and recommending to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council conditions for fishing and game seasons; and
 - (iv) by ensuring that there are sufficient resources to enforce fishing and hunting season conditions; and
 - (v) by undertaking such works as may be necessary to maintain and enhance the habitat of sports fish and game, subject to the approval of the Minister, the land owner, or the administering authority, as the case may require:
 - (c) to promote and educate—
 - (i) by defining and promoting ethical standards of behaviour to be followed by anglers and hunters; and
 - (ii) by promoting recreation based on sports fish and game; and
 - (iii) by keeping anglers and hunters informed on matters affecting their interests:
 - (d) in relation to costs,—
 - (i) to assess the costs attributable to the management of sports fish and game; and

- (ii) to develop and recommend to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council appropriate licence fees to recover costs and game bird habitat stamp fees; and
 - (iii) to represent the region's interests with the New Zealand Fish and Game Council in the determination and distribution of levies on licences:
- (e) in relation to planning,—
 - (i) to represent the interests and aspirations of anglers and hunters in the statutory planning process; and
 - (ii) to formulate and adopt an annual operational work plan; and
 - (iii) to prepare draft sports fish and game management plans in accordance with this Act; and
 - (iv) to identify and recommend to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council the region's sports fish and game requirements for research; and
 - (v) to implement national policy determined by the New Zealand Fish and Game Council; and
 - (vi) to liaise with local Conservation Boards; and
 - (vii) to advocate the interests of the Council, including its interests in habitats:
- (f) to issue—
 - (i) licences to hunt or kill game, and game bird habitat stamps, in accordance with the Wildlife Act 1953 and any regulations made under it; and
 - (ii) licences to take sports fish, in accordance with this Part and any regulations made under this Act; and
 - (iii) game hunting guide licences in accordance with the Wildlife Act 1953 and sports fishing guide licences in accordance with this Act:
- (g) to sell or arrange the sale of, in New Zealand or outside New Zealand, game bird habitat stamps and associated products:
- (h) to recommend to the New Zealand Fish and Game Council the form of game bird habitat stamps.

(2) Each Fish and Game Council shall have such other functions as are conferred on it by or under this Act or any other Act.

(3) The following provisions shall apply in respect of operational work plans:

- (a) each Fish and Game Council shall prepare such a plan annually:
- (b) such plans shall be submitted to the Minister for the Minister's approval if there is no sports fish and game management plan for the time being in force for the area:
- (c) the Minister shall approve or amend plans submitted under paragraph (b):
- (d) subject to paragraph (e), such plans shall have effect on and from the date of their completion by a Council but shall be subject to any amendments made by the Minister:
- (e) if there is no management plan for any species of sports fish or game for the time being in force for the region of a Council, those provisions of the Council's operational work plan that relate to the management of those species for which there is no management plan shall not have effect until approved by the Minister.

26R FISH AND GAME COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

- (1) In the performance of their responsibilities, Fish and Game Councils shall abide by the requirements of this Act and the Wildlife Act 1953 and any regulations made under either of those Acts.

(2) Except as provided in section 26Q(1), Fish and Game Councils shall not, within their areas of jurisdiction, engage in any activity that has as its predominant purpose the making of a commercial gain from that activity.

(3) The following provisions apply to Anglers Notices:

- (a) Fish and Game Councils shall prepare such notices:
- (b) Fish and Game Councils shall, through the New Zealand Fish and Game Council, recommend such notices for approval by the Minister:
- (c) the New Zealand Fish and Game Council shall, if satisfied as to the form of the notice, submit it for the Minister's approval:
- (d) as soon as practicable after a notice is approved by the Minister, the New Zealand Fish and Game Council shall publish the notice in the *Gazette*:
- (e) Fish and Game Councils shall make copies of notices available for sale to the public.

(4) An Anglers Notice shall set out the conditions under which a current licence holder may fish for sports fish in the area to which the notice relates, being conditions relating to—

- (a) the size and limit bag for any species of sports fish:
- (b) any open or closed season in any specified waters in the area, and the sports fish in respect of which they are open or closed:
- (c) any requirements, restrictions, or prohibitions on fishing tackle, methods, or the use of any gear, equipment, or device:
- (d) the hours of fishing:
- (e) the handling, treatment, or disposal of any sports fish.

(5) An Anglers Notice may also declare any waters within the area of jurisdiction of the Fish and Game Council to be fisheries experimental waters, and to make such provision for the protection of fish in those waters as in the opinion of the Minister are necessary or desirable for fish research purposes.

(6) Every person commits an offence and is liable to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 who takes any sports fish from any waters at any time or place, or with any device or in any manner, if such taking is not permitted by any Anglers Notice in force in respect of those waters.

26S POWERS OF FISH AND GAME COUNCILS

- (1) Each Fish and Game Council shall have all such powers as are reasonably necessary or expedient to enable it to carry out its functions.

(2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1) but subject to subsection (3), any Fish and Game Council may, by agreement,—

- (a) acquire and dispose of land or any interest in land for such purposes as are reasonably necessary to enable the Council to carry out its functions, including the provision of office premises:
- (b) acquire any land or interest in land formerly held by an acclimatisation society:
- (c) enter into contracts for the provision of services by it.

(3) every agreement under subsection (2) is subject to the following conditions:

- (a) in the case of an acquisition (other than for administrative purposes), the land or interest in land shall be acquired for use for the purposes of the management of sports fish or game, and the protection of their habitat:
- (b) no disposal (other than for administrative purposes) shall be made if the land or interest in land is required for the management of sports fish or game, or the protection of their habitat:

- (c) any land acquired under this section (other than for administrative purposes) shall be open to the public, and may be closed in order to protect the sports fish and game habitat only after public notice of the closure has been given in the region:
 - (d) the land use shall comply with the provisions of this Act and any other Act, and any freshwater fisheries management plan or sports fish and game management plan for the region in which the land is situated.
- (4) Subsection (3)(c) shall also apply to any land that is transferred to a Fish and Game Council under any other Act, as if that land had been acquired under this section.
- (5) All land held under this section shall be subject to this Act.
- (6) Each Fish and Game Council may expend money received by it from any source arising under this Act for the purposes of carrying out its functions under this Act.
- (7) For the purposes of section 26Q(1), a Fish and Game Council shall be entitled to appear before courts and tribunals in New Zealand and be heard on matters affecting or relating to the Council's functions.
- (8) Nothing in this section or in section 26Q shall enable any person to enter any land (other than land vested in a Fish and Game Council) without the consent of the owner or occupier.