

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2014 AT 3.00PM AT MASTERTON COSMOPOLITAN CLUB, 195 QUEEN STREET, MASTERTON

1. **Present:**

Councillors Jim Cook, Simon Muckley, Andy Tannock, Andrew Morris, Strato Cotsilinis, Brad Johnson

2. **In Attendance:**

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Steve Pilkington, Hamish Carnachan

Licenceholders: Alan Roy, John Pansters

Mr Teal indicated that Chairman Taylor was unavailable for the meeting and gave his apologies. It was then moved that

Councillor Cotsilinis be the Chairman for the meeting

Andy Tannock/Jim Cook

Carried

3. **Apologies:**

Chairman Martin Taylor Councillors Richard Moore, Chris O'Meara, Eric Neumann

Staff: Sue Wray, Corina Jordan

It was then moved that:

the apologies be accepted.

Andrew Morris/Jim Cook

Carried

4. **Public Participation**

Acting Chairman Cotsilinis welcomed the licenceholders to the meeting and invited them to bring forward any issues to Council.

5. **Conflicts of Interest**

A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of Interest. No further updates were added to the register.

6. **Minutes of Previous Meeting of 19 August 2014:**

After a brief discussion it was moved that:

the Minutes of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 19 August 2014 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Andrew Morris/Simon Muckley

Carried

7. **Matters Arising**

Mr Teal confirmed that there was a working group currently being set up to review aspects of the financial procedures within Fish & Game with Matthew Hall (CSI F&GC appointee), Paul Dixon-Didier (N/M F&GC appointee), and staff being involved in defining the terms of reference.

Mr Teal confirmed that he had sought information from regional councils throughout New Zealand as to what they considered a “significant environmental effect” and criteria or guidelines they might use to determine such.

Mr Teal confirmed that Corina Jordan had commenced her new position as Environmental Manager and was progressing on a number of projects around the country.

Councillor Cotsilinis confirmed that the Hutt Valley Intermediate School’s principal had confirmed an interest in being involved in the *Fish In Schools* programme.

8. **NZ Council Business**

Councillor Morris gave a brief update of the one day NZ Fish & Game Council meeting held on 19 September 2014 and referred to the unconfirmed minutes of that meeting.

Councillor Morris confirmed that Dave Witherow had been re-appointed as Otago F&GC’s appointee, despite the impression that he had been replaced by another appointee at the previous meeting.

Councillor Morris noted that the research co-ordinator had commented on uncompleted research projects and the desire to finalise outcomes in a timely manner.

Councillor Morris gave a brief update of the mallard research project noting that the funding opportunity provided from the Southland F&GC financial reserves was coming to a conclusion. He confirmed that an increase in the game licence fee two years ago was principally undertaken to be targeted to mallard research. He further considered that regardless of the adequacy of the size of the research fund, at least a third of that fund should be tagged to mallard research to enable research momentum to continue.

It was then moved that

Wellington Fish & Game Council write to NZ Council requesting that a third of the research fund be reserved for mallard research, in addition to the one dollar from the game licence that was already assigned to mallard research

Andrew Morris/ Andy Tannock

Carried

A brief discussion was held on the Fish & Game governors' workshop planned for 22 November 2014, with two sessions proposed: one focused on external opportunities/threats, and one on internal co-ordination involving NZ Council's audit role, national policy, and potential efficiency gains.

It was then moved

That the report presented by Councillor Morris relating to the NZ Fish & Game Council meeting on 19 September 2014 be received

Jim Cook/Simon Muckley

Carried

9. **2015 Meeting Timetable**

After brief discussion it was moved

that the provisional Wellington Council Meeting schedule be:

<i>17 February 2015</i>	<i>Masterton</i>
<i>7 April 2015</i>	<i>Wellington</i>
<i>9 June 2015</i>	<i>Palmerston North</i>
<i>18 August 2015</i>	<i>Masterton</i>
<i>13 October 2015</i>	<i>Wellington</i>
<i>8 December 2015</i>	<i>Palmerston North (Also AGM)</i>

Jim Cook/Andy Tannock

Carried

It was clarified that these dates could be confirmed at the December/February Council meetings but any changes to meeting dates needed to be made with reasonable notice, due to the extent of advertising required for public meetings.

10. Project Reports

Acting Chairman Cotsilinis congratulated the staff for the production of comprehensive and high quality reports, which was endorsed by other Councillors. Each project report was considered separately and briefly discussed for points of clarification or follow up:

Project report 1111 Sports Fish Population Monitoring

Councillor Cotsilinis noted that the Hutt River trout numbers counted in the drift dive programme remained high and this was reflected in current high fishing success by anglers. In response to a question by Councillor Morris, Mr Pilkington indicated that there were no significant concerns about some results in rivers that had lower counts in the drift dive survey as this may reflect only small changes to small overall count.

It was then moved that

the Project Report 1111 Sports Fish Population Monitoring be received

Andy Tannock/Andrew Morris

Carried

Project Report 1111A Trout Spawning Survey

Mr Teal explained that there were lesser number of rivers surveyed for spawning counts due to staff changes, but key sites in Manawatu River tributaries and the Mangaterere River were consistently monitored this year. Mr Allan Roy explained how the trout trap on the Mangaterere River had faired with regular freshes causing issues in equipment being washed away. Councillor Cotsilinis reinforced the importance of this work in terms of understanding the importance of the Mangaterere site, even in benign conditions, as this information should be required for assessing effects should an irrigation dam proposal proceed. The Wairarapa Fish & Game Club were sincerely thanked for their contribution in terms of time, skill, and energy in assisting with the project.

It was then moved that

the Project Report 1111A Trout Spawning Survey be received

Andy Tannock/Brad Johnson

Carried

Project Report 1112 Rangitikei Trout Fishery Management was noted as being received and considered by Council at the 10 June 2014 Council Meeting.

Project Report 1113 River Control Fishery Assessment was noted as being received and considered by Council at the 10 June 2014 Council Meeting.

Project Report 1114 Game Bird Population Assessments

Mr Pilkington explained when counting paradise shelduck moult sites as part of the normal operating procedures that he had counted up to 100 additional ponds but none were holding any birds. It was suggested that information be sought from landholders in January who could report moult sites and aggregations at that time to extend the current database of known sites.

Mr Teal clarified the transect count result for mallard/grey duck which indicated a slightly higher number than previous year's count, but still considered at a level where restrictive conditions would be applied.

Mr John Pansters arrived at 3.30pm

The fluctuations of black swan numbers over the years was noted, with the variability of count observations over such a wide area (including upper South Island and lower North Island) being a variance issue to be considered in interpretation. Discussion ensued on how to maximise hunting opportunity during these fluctuations – with reference to flexibility in the existing regulation setting policy.

It was then moved that

the Project Report 1114 Game Bird Population Assessments be received

Andrew Morris/Andy Tannock

Carried

Project Report 1114A Banding Report

Mr Teal gave an overview of the recorded data and noted the low return rate of bands from hunters, and expressed a lack of confidence in the quality of the data recorded. He indicated that caution should be used in analysis and subsequent interpretations.

It was then moved that

the Project Report 1114A Banding Report be received

Andrew Morris/Brad Johnson

Carried

Project Report 1181 Game Bird Dispersal

Mr Teal noted that numbers of dispersal permits issued were similar to previous years for all species, including paradise shelduck that are likely to come under political influence in upcoming reviews of regional councils' Pest Management Strategies.

It was then moved that

the Project Report 1181 Game Bird Dispersal be received

Jim Cook/Simon Muckley

Carried

Project Report 1121 National Hunter Harvest Survey

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the mallard/grey harvest pattern with a lower total harvest recorded – most likely reflecting a lower population or patchy distribution (when considered with hunter success rate figures), and the effect of restrictive hunting conditions used this season.

Mr Teal noted that the shoveler harvest was higher in recent years, which may reflect a higher national population but there was not necessarily an even distribution across the region. He noted that the paradise shelduck harvest was similar in 2014 to 2013, and the special summer season also appeared to be effective in dispersing the birds. The pheasant and pukeko harvests appeared to higher, although it was influenced by a few outliers in the sample selected.

It was then moved that

the Project Report 1121 National Hunter Harvest Survey be received

Andy Tannock/Andrew Morris

Carried

Project Report 1124 Regional Hunter Survey

Brief discussion ensued on the results – with particular comments noted on: (1) the lesser number of days that hunters anticipated hunting may have reflected the season conditions, and

(2) the distribution of grey teal and their opportunistic feeding habits including grain.

It was then moved that

the Project Report 1124 Regional Hunter Survey be received

Andy Tannock/Andrew Morris

Carried

Project 1124 Hunter Opinion and Preferences to Potential Restrictive Conditions was noted as being received and considered by Council at the 9 December 2013 Council Meeting.

Project Report 1114 Trend Count of NZ Shoveler Duck – National Project

Mr Teal noted that a summary of the draft report that had been provided which indicated that while Wellington region counts were down in 2014, the NZ wide population appeared to be stable.

It was then moved that

the summary of Project Report 1114 Trend Count of NZ Shoveler Duck – National Project be received

Jim Cook/Andy Tannock

Carried

Project Report 1211 Resource Management Advocacy

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of some of the continuing projects being consulted on, and how staff resources were being allocated to efficiently represent Wellington Fish & Game.

It was then moved to accept

the Project Report 1211 Resource Management Advocacy be received

Andrew Morris/Simon Muckley

Carried

Project Report 1233 Trout Reservoir Feasibility

The report would be considered in more detail later in the meeting and it was then moved that

the Project Report 1233 Trout Reservoir Feasibility be received

Strato Cotsilinis/Jim Cook

Carried

Project Report 1313 Hunter Access Permits – Lake Wairarapa, Wainuiomata River, Western Manawatu Forests

Discussion ensued on the continued success of permit issuance and availability of hunting at the lower Wainuiomata River sites, all with no incidents or safety concerns noted.

The efforts of Office Manager, Ms Sue Wray, in running the booking system for this site and the western Manawatu forests was acknowledged and extra effort required appreciated by the hunters.

It was then moved to accept

the Project Report 1313 Hunter Access Permits – Lake Wairarapa, Wainuiomata River, Western Manawatu Forests be received

Simon Muckley /Andrew Morris

Carried

Project Report – Communications Report Summary

Overview of Projects

- 1331 Newsletter/Magazine**
- 1341 Communication to Clients**
- 1342 Lapsed Participant Newsletter**
- 1441 Public Awareness**
- 1443 Promotions**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the principles used in the communication plan, and the merits of different media types used to provide information to licenceholders. Councillor Cotsilinis acknowledged the staff efforts in improving standard and quantity of communication to licenceholders.

It was then moved to accept

the Project Report – Communications Report Summary be received

Andy Tannock/Andrew Morris

Carried

Project Report 1351 Hunter Training, Lake Omanu

After brief discussion on the success and efforts required by the local club to ensure this operated safely and efficiently.

It was then moved that

the Project Report 1351 Hunter Training, Lake Omanu be received

Andy Tannock/Jim Cook

Carried

Project Report 1521 Rangers and 1531 Compliance

Mr Pilkington's excellent efforts in motivating the honorary rangers, undertaking ranging duties, and efficiently managing the compliance function were acknowledged. Mr Pilkington gave a brief overview of cases pending and provided clarification on reported figures for interpretation.

Mr Pansters noted how Hawke's Bay Fish & Game undertook their ranging duties with a part time ranger, given that their honorary ranger programme capacity was very limited.

It was then moved that

the Project Report 1521 Rangers and 1531 Compliance be received

Brad Johnson/Jim Cook

Carried

Project Report – Fish Licence Sales

The increase of fish licence sales was acknowledged, being an increase of 10% over budget and previous year's sales. It was noted that over half of the sales for fish licences was now electronic – either Agency On Line or Public On Line.

It was then moved that

the Project Report – Fish Licence Sales be received

Jim Cook /Brad Johnson

Carried

Project Report – Game Licence Sales

The game licence sales were higher than 2013 licence sales (by approximately 50 LEQs) and reached 99% of 2014 budget. While there had been a significant increase in Agency On Line sales, retail paper book licence sales was still the predominant sales mode.

It was then moved that

the Project Report – Game Licence Sales be received

Andrew Morris/Simon Muckley

Carried

Project Report 1611 Licence Agents Annual Report

Mr Teal gave an overview of licence agents, being relatively stable in number with four very small agencies ceasing to sell licences. There was a move by some of the larger agencies to Agency On Line from paper licence book sales, which made accountability easier, and potentially prepares the agents for sole (or principal) electronic sales modes planned for the upcoming year(s).

It was then moved that

the Project Report 1611 Licence Agents Annual Report be received

Jim Cook/Andrew Morris

Carried

Project Report – Occupational Safety and Health Annual Review

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of OSH policy recently adopted and noting only one vehicle accident which could not have been mitigated with OSH planning, risk identification, and risk avoidance.

It was then moved that

the Project Report – Occupational Safety and Health Annual Review be received

Andy Tannock/Andrew Morris

Carried

11. Draft Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plan – Wellington Region

Mr Teal gave an overview of the approach to drafting the ‘preliminary draft’ for consideration, including the structure and additional work required to define the regional fish and game resource. Councillors considered the issues listed for each functional output class, and general issues for the region.

It was then moved

That staff proceed with the development on the Draft Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plan for Wellington region with the general format presented and additional analysis and presentation required.

Jim Cook/Andy Tannock

Carried

It was anticipated that this will be presented to Council at the December 2014 meeting.

12. Application for Upland Game Property with Special Conditions - Waituna Game Preserve, Feilding

Councillor Cook declared a potential conflict of interest in that he had a non-commercial interest in the new pheasant block at Waituna which was subject of this application for upland game site with special conditions. It was agreed that Councillor Cook would remain in the meeting to be available to answer questions but would have no voting rights relating to this issue.

Mr Teal outlined that he had inspected the property with one of the potential gamekeepers for the site, and gave an overview of the terrain and existing cover present, proposed operational methods and principles, and key parameters (up to 3000 birds planned to be released). He referred to the draft “agreement to operate a game

preserve” as basis for discussion and recommended adding three clauses relating to: linking the operational agreement to the landowners permission agreement, contingency plan for monitoring and action for disease identification, responsibility lies with the operator to get DoC permit requirements given issuance likely to be via DoC Hamilton ‘hub’.

Councillor Cotsilinis sought clarification as to the sport fish carrying capacity of the stream, with it noted that the flow goes subterranean in summer.

It was confirmed that the birds would not be raised on site, and would be bred and raised at Cheltenham near Feilding, and trickle released on site.

Councillor Muckley sought clarification on the potential carrying capacity of the site and whether there were any guidelines for number of birds that should be released per given area. Councillor Cook informed that the carrying capacity was strongly linked to food provision.

Mr Teal confirmed that the topic of ‘public good’ was principally addressed by ‘leakage’ of birds from the site to the Rangitikei River flats nearby which would provide additional hunter opportunity. It was also clarified by Councillor Cook that there would be no exclusion of hunters on the properties that bounded the site, but that those hunters would have to abide by harvest conditions that applied to the wider region.

Councillor Tannock considered that there were no apparent negative aspects to this site being used for pheasant releases provided bird husbandry practices were kept up to standard. He noted that it would encourage others into the pursuit (including ancillary support – dog handlers), and there was high potential for ‘leakage’ of birds to the river hunting area. He also considered that the applicant be encouraged to have at least one junior hunting day as this is viewed as very positive by the hunting community, although it would not need to be a requirement of the agreement.

It was agreed that staff would proceed with negotiations with the applicant using the principles contained in the draft agreement (with additional clauses).

It was anticipated that this will be presented to Council at the December 2014 meeting to enable consideration of the Game Season Regulations for 2015.

13. Consideration of Hunting Season Conditions 2015 – Preliminary Discussion of Options

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of mallard/grey transect counts results which indicated that restrictive season conditions would apply in 2015, and that Council could give consideration of options to be considered for defining initial recommendations made at the December 2014 meeting. This could include: current 'restrictive' conditions for bag limit and season length, relaxing either bag limit or season length, including restriction on number of shot in semi-auto shotguns, combination of any of these, or additional options.

Councillor Tannock also introduced a concept of having a low limit of say two mallard ducks on the licence for an extended period (eg additional two weeks to bring to a total of eight weeks) if black swan were also able to be hunted for eight weeks. He also noted that the concept of a 'limited bag' but an extended season for shoveler duck could also apply as they are managed as a national population, and a longer open season exists in many South Island regions. These regulatory options would be considered at the December Council meeting.

Councillor Tannock also considered the merits of repeating the email survey undertaken last year that questioned hunters on preferred restrictive harvest options. The purpose of the email survey would be to obtain hunter opinion on consideration harvest conditions: retention of status quo conditions for another year, a limited dabbling duck bag limit extension by two weeks, potential feedback to other regions having three shot restrictions for semi-auto shotguns and relevance to Wellington region. It was agreed that staff would undertake this email survey and report back to Council with results at the December meeting.

There was further discussion on the potential restriction on semi-auto shotguns, and potential negative feedback from hunters who had become accustomed to using their five shot semi-auto shotguns over a number of years. The merits were discussed of being more proactive in educating hunters around the ethics of hunting, and avoidance of wounding birds at longer distances. It was agreed that this aspect would be considered in light of the feedback from the email survey and other feedback from other regions – given that a request to have a consistent North Island-wide approach.

14. Pencarrow Lakes Access Submission Update

Mr Teal gave a brief update of actions undertaken with respect to retaining access at Pencarrow lakes:

- A press release had been distributed in late August with a substantial item being shown on TV3 News, and there had been follow up from another TV3 current affairs programme.
- Information requests had been sent to all regional councils regarding what they considered to be a significant environmental effect and guidelines they used to

determine such; most regional councils had sought clarification on the information request, with Greater Wellington Regional Council also seeking an extension of time to respond;

- Any submission to the Regulation Review committee would require a summary of the information requested;
- the Co-Management Plan had not been confirmed by the Greater Wellington Regional Council in accordance with the timetable being indicated in the Hearings Committee minutes.

15. Junior Participation Update

Mr Carnachan presented an overview of the junior participation programme and summary of investigations into potential reservoir fisheries. He provided a commentary of the sites with most potential for fish release and fish-out days with focus on the Royal Wellington Golf Club site in the Hutt Valley. He indicated that he had met with Golf Club staff on site and discussed logistics, an open day for junior anglers, and willingness of the Golf Club to progress the release of trout to supplement numbers already present. The merits were discussed of focussing on brown trout as a preferred species given that the Hutt River is considered a brown trout fishery, how brown trout react to typical 'fish out' day human activity, and availability of stock from hatcheries. It was agreed that the Hutt Valley Angling Club would be consulted by staff for their views on any proposals, and that Royal Wellington Golf Club be contacted to advise that Fish and Game is actively pursuing an expression of interest.

Mr Teal also noted other sites that had been given higher priority due to potential for collaborative efforts including:

- Otaki Reservoir site – the regional council indicate that they will be undertaken enhancement of site when gravel extraction ceases in two years;
- Dannevirke Reserve site – good potential and interest from local sponsor;
- Otaihanga East Reserve site – strong interest from Kapiti Coast Flyfishing Club to be involved, as well as positive feedback by District Council on proposals to date
- Duddings Lake – potential site for alternative to Centennial Lagoon, Palmerston North site which was still significantly leaking post January earthquake.

Mr Carnachan gave an overview of the *Fish in Schools* programme with equipment such as tanks, filters, and chillers having been purchased. He noted that trout ova would now only be available in early autumn and could be held for up to six months before release, to coincide with school programmes and school holidays. He noted that he had expected a greater level of information flow from the nationally-funded facilitator of the North Canterbury *Fish in Schools* programme, and that providing written outputs would have been a key performance outcome including: curriculum requirements, how to manuals for trout as well as salmon rearing, and documents to be able to present to school teachers to 'sell' the potential of the programme to them.

Councillor Morris suggested that Wellington F&GC send a letter to North Canterbury F&GC (and NZ F&GC) to request urgently the information from the existing programme that could be used in other regions.

It was then moved that

A letter be sent to North Canterbury Fish and Game Council supporting the Fish in Schools initiatives and efforts, but requesting that appropriate written material be provided (with urgency and priority) on operational procedures, curriculum potential, and material that could be used by schools.

Jim Cook/Andrew Morris

Carried

16. Lake Wairarapa Update

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the progress on the fish removal project at Bartons Lagoon where GWRC staff and consultant had recently undertaken another removal event – indicating a spike in fish numbers caught and confirming that the netting intensity was not sufficient to reduce perch or rudd numbers.

Mr Teal noted that the most recent Wairarapa Moana Management Group meeting had been deferred due to unavailability of members.

Mr Teal noted that the weir consent had been operating as per conditions set out, and that the regional council had an independent engineer to provide advice on future weir options.

Mr Carnachan updated Council that commercial sales of perch could only occur under current legislation if they were from a 'farmed' situation – as per salmon farms.

Mr Teal confirmed that the trail cameras at JK Donald Wetland access site would remain in place, and that procedures had been developed for regular uplifting of data cards, analysis, and recording of vehicle movements. Councillor Tannock noted that there may be some merit in offering an additional vehicle access sticker, where hunters used more than one vehicle to access the wetland site.

Councillor Morris noted that a gift basket as a gesture of appreciation had been presented to Paula Gillett to acknowledge continued co-operation in securing access to the wetland site. He also noted that she had concerns with the height of the Tauheranikau River bed at the delta and there were potential opportunities for Fish & Game to prioritise any work programmes of the regional council. These works could be potentially be undertaken to assist management of Simmonds Lagoon.

17. Mallard Research Project Update

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the progress on the mallard project with hen birds being monitored with radio-transmitters in Auckland/Waikato and Southland regions respectively. Initial results provided an indication of number of non-breeding birds, and also a higher than expected number of fatalities in hens and offspring due to a range of predators. Councillor Tannock considered there could be a wider endorsement of predator control initiatives such as those developed by the Waterfowl Enhancement Trust (Swamp Comp). It was suggested that such worthwhile initiatives be promoted in the Fish & Game NZ magazine to provide credibility, generate interest to undertake action, and provide advice on how to effectively undertake predator control programmes on small to medium scale.

Mr Alan Roy left the meeting at 5.30pm

18. Management Report 1 August – 30 September 2014

After brief discussion it was moved that

The management report for 1 August – 30 September 2014 be received.

Brad Johnson/Jim Cook

Carried

19. Fishing Licence Report and Game Licence Report

After brief discussion it was moved that

The Fish Licence Sales and Game Licence Sales reports as at 31 August 2014 be received.

Brad Johnson/Andrew Morris

Carried

20. Expenditure Report

Councillor Cotsilinis gave an overview interpretation of the budget reports indicating a good surplus (prior to accruals being considered) resulting from prudent expenditure and good numbers of licence sales, and considered this to be an excellent result. Discussion ensued on the potential of regions to contribute to the mallard research project from reserves should the reserves level exceed 50% of cash flow requirements.

After discussion it was moved that

the Expenditure Report for 31 August 2014 and Financial Transactions for July and August 2014 be approved

Jim Cook/ Brad Johnson

Carried

21. Correspondence

The memo from NZ Council Chairman regarding NZ Council's co-ordination role and audit function was discussed – noting that initially this was provided for each regions' information, but it would provide the basis for discussion at the upcoming Governors Meeting in November.

Brief discussion ensued on correspondence and media after which it was then moved that

Correspondence and Media reports for August – September 2014 be received

Simon Muckley/Brad Johnson

Carried

22. General Business

Councillor Cook briefly discussed promoting hunting of non-game birds such as plover that were considered game birds overseas, including provision of recipes and 'how to hunt' advice.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 5.45pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Upper Hutt Cosmopolitan Club, Logan Rd, Upper Hutt Tuesday 9 December 2014 at 3.00pm.

Chairman_____

Date_____