

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 6 JUNE 2023 AT 3.45PM AT CLUB WAIRARAPA, 20 ESSEX STREET, MASTERTON

1. **Present:**

Chairman Paul Dewar; Councillors Malcolm Francis, Andrew McGregor, Jennifer Yanko, Prof. Stephen Haslett, Jim Cook, John Hancock.

Present on Zoom Link:

Councillors Colin Shore, Don Scott, Aaron Passey (part), Richard McIntyre

In Attendance:

Fish and Game Staff: Phil Teal

Licence Holders: John Pansters (part), James Cates (part), Paul Shortis (part)

Public: Jim Law (part), Jim Campbell (part)

Welcome and Confirmation of Agenda

Chairman Dewar opened the meeting and acknowledged the delay in starting the meeting by 45 minutes was due to a temporary road closure on the main route. He acknowledged that Councillor Haslett was still en route, and that while council business would be discussed, any motions of business need to be made when a quorum was present in person.

Mr Teal clarified that the provision under the Epidemic Preparedness Notice to allow for counting attendance at a meeting via videoconference as being part of the quorum was repealed in October 2022. This means that when holding a meeting under the LGOIMA Act (including Fish and Game Council meetings) reverted to having the majority must be physically present at the venue (seven in Wellington Fish and Game Council's case *Conservation Act 1987: 26ZD (3)*). He further noted that under the Rules for the Conduct of Meetings/Standing Orders for the purposes of clauses 27(1) and (2) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002 there is provision for a member to attend via videoconference and reasonable steps should be made to allow for attendance with speaking rights – but could not be considered part of the quorum present.

Draft and Unconfirmed

2. **Apologies:**

It was noted that apologies were received from
Councillors Steve Brown, Steven Haslett (late)
Staff: Hamish Carnachan, Dr Matt Kavermann, Ami Coughlan.
Licence holders: Simon Robertson

This would be formally acknowledged when a quorum was present.

It was moved
that apologies be accepted

Malcolm Francis/John Hancock
(pending quorum present)

3. **Conflict of Interest**

The Conflicts of Interest Register was discussed - no additional conflicts specific to the agenda were noted and no further additions required to the Conflict of Interest register.

Mr Teal confirmed that the Conflict-of-Interest register was updated accordingly from the previous meeting, and Conflict of Interest Management Plan was also updated with the new conflicts of interest that were identified and how Council intended to deal with managing a conflict.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting of 21 March 2023:**

After brief consideration of the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish and Game Council of 21 March 2023 it was agreed to confirm these once a quorum was present.

5. **Matters Arising:**

Mr Teal confirmed that he had included Wellington Council's contestable fund applications were considered in the organisation's budgeting process.

Mr Teal also updated Council that NZ Council were seeking an external provider to provide governance training via webinar.

Mr Teal noted that he had had brief discussions with Kahungunu representatives on the post settlement arrangements for the management of Wairarapa Moana.

6. **New Zealand Fish and Game Council Business**

Chairman Dewar deferred this item until Councillor Haslett was present.

7. Public Forum.

Chairman Dewar provided an opportunity for public to present items to Council.

John Pansters took the opportunity to uptake Council on activities and views of the Wairarapa Fish and Game Club. Mr Pansters confirmed that the Wairarapa Fish and Game Club had continued with its recruitment programme and that 16 participants had been taken through the introductory flyfishing and fly-tying courses over the previous summer period.

Mr Pansters provided a brief overview of the Wairarapa Fish and Game Club's submission on the angling regulations. The club's view was that there was a need to create further opportunities by increasing the perch harvest limit in Lake Wairarapa – to increase the value as a family meal option. They considered that a perch limit greater than 4 was warranted – given the apparent abundance and distribution within the catchment area. The Club's request was to increase the limit to at least 10 or preferably no limit.

Councillor Haslett arrived at the meeting at 4.00pm

Mr Pansters then confirmed the Wairarapa Fish and Game Club's position on the use of treble hooks in the tributaries of the Ruamahanga catchment flowing from the Tararua Ranges that are closed during the spawning season. He had observed that the number of trout in these waters appeared to be declining and accordingly less spawning fish had been observed in recent years. He provided the background that the restriction on the use of treble hooks was initiated about four years ago to restrict the use of a 'rapala' lure for spinning when examples of potential overfishing were occurring. He postulated that there seemed to be greater mortality when using treble hooks. He further noted that the rationale for removing the use of treble hooks was to simplify the regulations and he considered that simple efforts such as not allowing use of treble hooks to assist in the conservation of fish in the 'sensitive' fisheries was warranted – especially in the tributary waterbodies.

Councillor Cook noted that if there was a one fish limit then it shouldn't make too much difference in the method used – as the harvest limit would be limiting total harvest. Councillor Scott noted that this limit could be considered a subsistence harvest to allow for continued harvest levels. He noted that from scientific studies there was no significant difference in the mortalities or injuries to fish whether it was a single or treble hook (also noting that there was likely difference between standard hooks and barbless hook use).

Paul Shortis then spoke in further support of the Wairarapa Fish and Game Club's position on treble hooks. He noted that the original motivations to ban in the upper waters (which the club considered to be sensitive fisheries) was two-fold: a potential for over-harvest using a particular lure (with two treble hooks) and how to minimise stress to fish should it be released. The latter was not only related to potential damage to the fish but the potential extra time spent handling the fish. He had undertaken a quick summary of how other Fish and Game councils were viewing the use of treble hooks. He concluded that while they were a legal part of lures for most of the rivers around the country, that this issue was under active consideration by several Fish and Game regions. He postulated that Fish and Game should not be encouraging the use of treble hooks in terms of the ethical considerations and social licence to operate. He concluded that the continued ban on treble hooks in the rivers currently restricted was consistent with that principle. He further suggested that the ban could be extended in multiple rivers across the region and wider New Zealand.

This item would be further considered in the fishing regulation item on the agenda.

James Cates (licence holder) arrived at the meeting at 4.15pm

Chairman Dewar confirmed that there was a quorum present and that the agenda had been re-organised to take that into account.

8. Ministerial Review of Fish and Game Governance – Implementation Update

Chairman Dewar provided a brief summary of regional Fish and Game Chairs' meeting where they collectively still considered positive to making progress in implementing recommendations made in the report.

He noted that one option put forward was for MOUs to be signed between regions rather than formal amalgamations with a view to making more efficient use of resources – and to show to the Minister that some progress is being made to change the structure of Fish and Game. Discussion ensued on leadership required to move things forward rather than reconsidered and alternative options proposed to give an 'appearance' of doing something. It was considered disappointing that this approach is not leading to a stronger organisation, and this could lead to an externally lead restructure - with control and governance of the fisheries and game resources being materially different. Councillor McGregor reiterated that the Ministerial Review has indicated the main elements that require change – even if there are nuances to the implementation of the recommendations.

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Councillor Passey noted the risk of larger regions amalgamating with smaller regions appearing as a hostile takeover – as the smaller regions will typically not support this approach and quickly erode any goodwill in terms of progressing an amalgamation.

Councillor Haslett confirmed that there was no uniformity of opinion on how to approach the implementation of the full suite of recommendations made in the Ministerial Review. A proposed alternative review to governance approaches by NZ Council has not met universal support.

General discussion ensued with it agreed that there was enough information and advice to implement changes and just get on and do things even if we don't like it. Councillor Cook considered that professional reviews had already been completed, and that there was a significant risk that non-implementation of recommendations could lead to the demise of Fish and Game by external intervention. They expressed their general frustration and disappointment at the lack of progress on implementation beyond Wellington region.

Councillor Passey confirmed that Taranaki and Wellington Fish and Game representatives had met with respect to progressing an amalgamation. It was pointed out that there may be an initial limitation in legal amalgamation that would limit the extent of operational/governance changes. He suggested that a working group made up of Taranaki and Wellington councillors should be formed to focus on the amalgamation process. He further noted that NZ Council (expressed through their Chief Executive) had been helpful in providing support and resources (where there was a national benefit). In the short term it was anticipated that the two regions would be operationally working better together with shared services to move forward as two parallel business units. The concept is to continue operating (initially) as two separate Council entities but eventually be operating as one region with core services. Discussion also ensued on the potential to employ another field staff member to take into account the changes in management responsibilities and commitments for a larger region.

Chairman Dewar noted that Wellington Fish and Game Council would enter into an agreement with Taranaki Fish and Game Council for share services, where Wellington Fish and Game Council would invoice Taranaki Fish and Game Council for provision of management services and potentially employ additional staff members to undertake services and outputs.

It is recognised that this shared services arrangement would operate under the same total budgets approved, and that the two Councils would continue

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to operate as parallel business units as an amalgamation has not been formally agreed (either by Councils or the Minister of Conservation).

After further discussion it was moved that

Wellington Fish and Game Council agree to amalgamate with Taranaki Fish and Game Council on an operational basis with the sharing services and management resources, staff resources, and overhead resources etc.

The Councils will remain separate legal entities with individual governance arrangements and reporting requirements. The intention of this approach is that when the legislation is changed a full amalgamation of the two regions will be completed – including governance and resourcing as a single region.

Paul Dewar/Malcolm Francis

Carried

Councillor Hancock sought clarification as to whether Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council had indicated their preferences for possible changes to governance arrangements including potential amalgamations with Eastern Fish and Game Council or Wellington Fish and Game Council. Chairman Dewar confirmed that Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council were seeking further information from Eastern Fish and Game Council on potential amalgamations with consideration of a draft proposal from Eastern Fish and Game Council. He confirmed that all options for future governance of Hawke's Bay region, including a potential amalgamation with Wellington/Taranaki Fish and Game Councils or provision of shared services, were still actively being considered. As part of the discussions held with Taranaki Fish and Game Council representatives on amalgamation, it was considered that if Hawke's Bay wished to be part of any wider amalgamation that they would follow the same process already in train. It was clarified that Wellington/Taranaki representatives were open and positive for Hawke's Bay region to be part of the process to form a larger Fish and Game region. They would however likely join at a point where progress to confirm a formal amalgamation had been made – and they would join in on that process.

Chairman Dewar referred to the concept of formally establishing a working group to progress the potential implementation of amalgamation of the two Fish and Game regions – with initial operational configurations being parallel business units. Councillor McIntyre sought clarification on the potential delegations of the working group. Chairman Dewar noted that these would be defined in the Terms Of Reference (TOR) decided by the two Councils. Councillor Scott noted that he agreed and supported the progress being made, but sought clarification as to whether there would be two appointees

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to NZ Council – both in the interim and post amalgamation. Chairman Dewar confirmed that while the governance remains separated that both appointees to NZ Council would be retained but the initial focus would be on an operational merge. It was noted that both Councils need to agree in order to proceed as this was currently a voluntarily approach.

Discussion ensued on the specifics of a working group including:

- Its flexibility – that it can change over time and with changing membership
- Defining the number of governors on the working group
- Discussion on potential members.

It was then moved that

Wellington Fish and Game Council form a working group from a subcommittee to liaise with the Taranaki Fish and Game Council on the potential operational amalgamation. The subcommittee will consist of the Council Chair and two councillors. This subcommittee is proposed to have the delegated authority to make decisions re the amalgamation on behalf of the council. The terms of reference of the subcommittee will define the specific purpose, functions, goals – and delegated authorities.

Paul Dewar/Jim Cook
Carried

After further discussion on membership of the subcommittee it was agreed that the subcommittee have four possible Wellington Council members with only (up to) three present in discussions Taranaki representatives. In addition to the Chair being on the subcommittee there would be three other Wellington councillors available for meetings with two attending.

It was moved that the nominations for the three councillors for the working group be

Aaron Passey

Paul Dewar/Jim Cook

Malcolm Francis

Jennifer Yanko/John Hancock

Richard McIntyre

Jim Cook/Andrew McGregor

These councillors were all confirmed as being on the working group.

Draft and Unconfirmed

Councillor Haslett considered if there was a role for NZ Council councillors to be included in discussions to provide feedback to the wider organisation. It was agreed that this would be a useful function as an observer status for each NZ Council appointee. There was further discussion on whether the NZ Council appointee could have voting rights as a voting member, but Councillor Haslett noted that everyone on each Council will make their respective decisions so this was not a necessity for voting rights per se.

Chairman Dewar noted that it was intended that the working group meet immediately prior (two weeks prior) to any rounds of regional Fish and Game Council meetings.

John Pansters left the meeting at 4.30pm

9. Apologies (continued):

Following discussion of the earlier agenda item it was noted that apologies were received from

Councillors Steve Brown, Steven Haslett (late)

Staff: Hamish Carnachan, Dr Matt Kavermann, Ami Coughlan.

Licence holders: Simon Robertson

It was moved that

apologies be accepted

Malcolm Francis/John Hancock

Carried

Councillor Passey left the Zoom meeting at 4.40pm.

10. Minutes of Previous Meeting of 21 March 2023 (continued):

Following earlier consideration of the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish and Game Council of 21 March 2023 it was moved that

the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 21 March 2023 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis

Carried

11. New Zealand Fish and Game Council Business

Councillor Haslett reported on the outcomes from the NZ Fish and Game Council meeting held on the 21 and 22 April 2023.

- **Sub-Committees/Working Groups were formed:**
Terms of Reference being developed for ratification.

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Future Structure Working Group: Daryl Reardon, Dave Harris, Gerard Karalus, Colin Weatherall and Bruce Bates

Future Finance Group: Barrie Barnes, Dean Phibbs, Debbie Oakley, Alan Strong and Nigel Juby

Research Group: Prof. Steve Haslett is a group member

Councillor Hancock sought clarification on how the groups were reporting back to NZ Council. It was confirmed by Councillor Haslett that updates and frequency of meetings would be talked about in open forum (if it was not confidential).

- **Organisation Strategy:**

NZC approved the organisational strategy. It is intended to have this back within a month and will be circulated to regions once final.

- **23/24 Licence Reforecast:**

NZC incorporated Non-Resident levy into the licence forecast LEQ. This has increased the LEQ forecast by approximately 4,000 and has off-set the increase required of our licence fee.

Cyclone Gabrielle has impacted the original forecast in licence sales by 20-30% for Hawke's Bay. It was agreed for this reduction in forecast LEQ's for the Hawke's Bay to be paid out of their reserves.

- **RMA Applications:**

NZC agreed to fund:

- Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 (Healthy Rivers) \$100,000; and
- Rakaia River Water Conservation Order \$180,000.

The proposed changes to the RMA via the NBEA Bill constitutes a major problem if reference to protecting the habitats of trout and salmon are removed.

- **Research Applications:**

NZC agreed to fund:

- The Eastern project for Australasian Shoveler Management Project \$8,000.
- Licence Sales Insights \$21,000 (this links to the NZC CF project to develop a licence fee category optimisation model over the next two years).

Draft and Unconfirmed

- State and trends of the NZ trout population and key environmental drivers \$38,790.

- **HR Plan & Remuneration Policy:**

Discussed the plan to provide HR functions across the organisation, including the provision and roll out of the HR Hero system.

The draft Remuneration Policy is to be circulated to the regions for feedback.

- **Notifying Designated Waters/Proposed Licence Fees:**

NZC agreed to amend the Designated Waters licence system to:

- Increase the limit on non-resident day licences to five days per region; and
- Decouple Controlled Fisheries and Designated Waters.

Consulting on proposal to have a \$5 Designated Waters annual licence fee per region for resident anglers and a \$40 Designated Waters day licence fee for non-resident anglers.

- **Residency Definition:**

NZC agreed to consult with the regions on amending the definition of resident and non-resident to align with DoC Taupō and Immigration Act definitions.

- **Draft Reserves Policy:**

NZC consulting on the draft Reserves Policy

- **Magazine Update:**

NZC agreed to engage an alternative supplier to complete the 2023 Fishing magazine and to consider future production of the magazine as part of a review of Fish and Game's communication strategy.

After brief discussion it was moved that

***The report from Councillor Haslett on NZ Fish and Game Council
business and meetings be received***

Malcolm Francis/John Hancock

Carried

12. **Health and Safety Reporting – April 2023 to May 2023**

Mr Teal confirmed that he had made the Health and Safety meetings of weekly frequency to deal with a dynamic situation, and also provide an opportunity for more regular health and safety discussions/updates.

It was moved that

Council receives the Health and Safety Report for April 2023 and May 2023

Jennifer Yanko/Andrew McGregor

Carried

13. Licence Fee Recommendation

Wellington Fish and Game Council considered the paper Licence Fee Recommendation 2023/2024 authored by Corina Jordan, CEO NZ Fish and Game Council dated 8 May 2023.

After discussion it was moved that

***Wellington Fish and Game Council would support the recommendation for licence fees as noted below:
the licence fees and categories as set out in the schedule attached to the paper as Appendix 2 and specifically:***

- a. That the 2023/24 adult whole season sports fish licence fee is set at \$153 and that the adult whole season game licence is set at \$113 (inclusive of a \$5 fee for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp), with all proportional changes to remaining licence fees and categories including a \$5 fee being added to the sea run salmon licence endorsement (as a cost-recovery mechanism).***
- b. That a new licence category is established called a Designated Waters Licence, available as a \$5 annual licence per Fish and Game region for resident anglers and as a day licence to non-resident anglers at a fee of \$40.***

Jennifer Yanko/Don Scott

Carried

14. Draft National Policy on Reserve Management

Wellington Council considered the paper *Draft National Reserves Policy* authored by Corina Jordan dated 8 May 2023.

After discussion Wellington Council considered that the draft National Reserves Policy provided clarity on the definitions of various reserve types, and the notification/approval processes to use the reserves.

It was then moved that

Wellington Fish and Game Council supports the proposed Draft National Reserves Policy as presented in the paper Draft National Reserves Policy authored by Corina Jordan dated 8 May 2023.

Malcom Francis/Colin Shore

Carried

Draft and Unconfirmed

It was clarified that the monies received from Genesis Energy for the management of trout fisheries in the Upper Rangitikei River was a restricted reserve.

It was moved

To clarify that the Upper Rangitikei Trout Management Reserve is a restricted reserve

Paul Dewar/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

15. **Consultation on Definition of Resident and Non-Resident**

Wellington Council considered the paper Resident/Non-Resident Definition authored by Corina Jordan, CEO NZ Fish and Game Council dated 8 May 2023. After considerable discussion Wellington Fish and Game Council concluded that it would not support amending the current definition of Resident/Non-Resident, and therefore would not support solely on the Immigration Act definition or DOC Taupo's definition. It was agreed that the current Fish and Game definition was a fairer definition.

Council considered that the proposed amendment(s) did not recognise the value of working migrants that contribute to paying taxes and contributing to the community. By contributing to the central tax take, that considering migrant workers to be non-resident conflicts with the intent and justification for having a pricing differential – i.e. that they would contribute to wider water management within New Zealand through general taxation.

Other issues of compliance in checking resident and non-resident status in the field was problematic. Additional discussion occurred on better publicising the need for a fishing licence to migrant workers to generate more awareness in the rural communities of the need to have a licence to fish.

Discussion then focused on the benefits of fishing such as enhancing feelings of wellbeing were just as relevant to migrant workers. It was concluded that there is a difference in the motives between a migrant worker contributing to the rural economy vs a high value tourist whose primary purpose was to utilise the resource.

It was moved that

Wellington Fish and Game does not support the proposed amendments to the Fish and Game definitions on resident and non-resident anglers – and for clarity that the definition for such should not rely solely on the definitions used by DoC Taupo fisheries and/or the Immigration Act.

Malcolm Francis/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

16. Draft Remuneration Policy

Wellington Council considered the paper *Draft Remuneration Policy* authored by Corina Jordan, CEO NZ Fish and Game Council dated 8 May 2023. This was considered an operational policy but appropriate for Council to consider as they also needed to be aware of their obligations as employers.

Wellington Fish and Game Council supported the following concepts and proposed approaches noted in the Draft Remuneration Policy:

- A consistent organisational approach to evaluating staff performance and adjusting remuneration on an annual basis, based off staff performance and updated General market movement across comparable organisations.
- Strategic Pay has provided Fish and Game with remuneration and market assessments for at least seventeen years – for remuneration of similar roles in similar organisations, such as local government – and they should be the principal providers of information to maintain consistency.
- Remuneration information is provided from a market assessment done in March each year to inform of any remuneration changes required for the new Financial Year starting 1 September each year.
- Comparing staff remuneration to the General Market movement should ensure there is an awareness of remuneration levels in a competitive employment market.
- Council wishes to ensure that staff are appropriately and fairly remunerated for their contribution to Fish and Game in representing the needs of hunters and anglers.

Further discussion ensued on:

- Ensuring that Fish and Game can afford the remuneration recommendations and be aware of potential budget constraints.
- The remuneration policy should apply to all staff including Chief Executives.
- The job sizing number resulting from the current job sizing exercise should be confirmed as the assessment number - so it does not cause tension for annual review. Reviews of job sizing should only occur if job descriptions and/or expectations of the position category change materially.
- How do we deal with contracts that already have CPI explicitly stated, with a reasonable expectation that this would continue for annual review?

Draft and Unconfirmed

- Acknowledge that there is some refinement (in detail) of some of the clauses in the Draft Remuneration Policy and note it is an operational policy document.
- There is currently no mechanism to cause restraint on spending on remuneration by some regional councils. There needs to be some clarification as to whether this is a 'guide' or 'required approach' for each entity to follow as an approach to employment issues - and if it is a guideline then identifying mechanisms such as MOUs between regions to encourage following the guidelines to ensure consistency.

After further discussion Wellington Fish and Game Council resolved that ***Wellington Fish and Game supports the concepts and intent of the remuneration policy to try and get internal consistency of remuneration and also ensure staff remunerations remain competitive following General Market assessments.***

Wellington Council also considered that assessments must be made during the budgeting process to ensure Fish and Game can afford the remuneration recommendations and be aware of potential budget constraints.

Paul Dewar/Jim Cook

Carried

17. **Recommendations for the Draft Anglers Notice**

Wellington Council discussed the paper by Dr Matt Kavermann date 17 May 2023 which covered the potential changes to the Anglers Notice for 2023/2024 Fishing Season. After Council considered and discussed the various recommendations it was moved that

Council recommends that a Note through the 2023/2024 Anglers Notice for the Wellington Fish and Game region sports fish regulation be: Except in the case of perch, for which there is no daily limit, no licence holder shall on any one day take and kill or be in possession of more than the prescribed daily limit from the waters specified in the schedule.

Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis

Carried

After discussion on the Designated Water categorisation it was moved that

The Upper Rangitikei River (north of the Ohinewaione Stream confluence) is classified as a Designated Water

Malcolm Francis/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

Draft and Unconfirmed

It was clarified that the Whakarekou River which had previously been described as a Backcountry Water is not classified as a Designated Water as this stage, until such time that monitoring of angler activity deems it necessary.

Jim Law and Jim Campbell arrived at the meeting at 5.40pm

Discussion ensued on the use of treble hooks in sensitive waters – which are currently restricted. A range of opinions were discussed. Councillor Hancock noted that there was research evidence to support recommending removal of the current ban on the use of treble hooks in specific waters. Councillor Francis noted that the Kapiti Fly Fishing Club had discussed the issue and had concluded that it was easier to use single hooks if removal of hooks when handling fish that were to be released. Councillor McGregor noted that there is potentially increased risk of damage to fish (through stress or hook removal) and that it also posed an ethical issue that might damage the social licence to fish. Councillor Scott noted that the independent research did not support any difference in injuries to fish whether a single or treble hook were used. Councillor McInyre questioned whether mortality of fish from using different hook configurations should be the only criteria. He considered that the ethical considerations for catch and release needed to be sound – whether single or treble hooks are used. Councillor Cook noted that many anglers start fishing with spinning gear and harvesting a fish might be a prime goal – rather than the purists who also practice catch and release as a conservation measure. Chairman Dewar noted that a key element in the education of (novice) anglers is through sports/fishing agents to sell only single hook lures.

It was moved that

There be no change in the regulations regarding the use of treble hooks

Malcolm Francis/Colin Shore

Carried

by majority

Don Scott noted as being against motion.

Chairman Dewar welcomed Mr Law and Mr Campbell to the meeting and invited them to speak.

Jim Law provided an overview of the projects that Ducks Unlimited had been involved with at Lake Wairarapa and the Wairio Wetland in particular. He gave an update of the 'management contract' that had just been renewed for a further year which had expired on 28 April 2023 after a three 3-year and one year extension terms with DOC. There appeared to be a positive level of

Draft and Unconfirmed

support for continuing with aligned projects with the new Statutory Reserve Board.

Paul Shortis left the meeting at 5.50pm

Specific discussion continued on the details of the restoration of the wetland including water level management, the management of the site for native fish species including fish passage, and collaborations with multiple stakeholders.

Councillor Scott left the Zoom Meeting at 6.10pm

The meeting was adjourned at 6.10pm for dinner and reconvened at 6.45pm

18. **Recognition of Contributions Awards**

Mr Teal provided an overview of the achievements of Mr Law and Mr Campbell.

Chairman Dewar presented each with their medals recognising their outstanding contributions:

- **Jim Law** for outstanding contribution and leadership in habitat projects in the Lake Wairarapa environs
- **Jim Campbell** for outstanding contribution and leadership in habitat improvement projects in the Wairarapa over many decades

Acclamation

James Cate left the meeting at 6.50pm

19. **Sports Fish and Game Management Plan**

Mr Teal confirmed the consultation phase of the Draft Sports Fish and Game Management Plan was ready to go but halted while amalgamation discussions were occurring.

A. Workshop for Engaging with Iwi/Mana Whenua

Mr Teal noted that he had looked for some external providers to give advice on tikanga and protocols to allow meaningful and respectful dialogue. This was undertaken with a view to developing a workshop for iwi engagement plan for Wellington Iwi and Mana Whenua.

Other workstreams were being considered for development of this or the next iteration of the Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plan:

B. Developing workshop for setting regulations

This has not progressed and may require a working group to scope issues and how the wider Council workshop will progress.

20. Licence Management Contract

Mr Teal provided an overview of the functioning of the Licence Management System operated by ESL.

A. Update on Licence Management System

Mr Teal provided an overview of the current contract – where ESL have provided a Minimum Viable Product (an operational system to collect licence fees and reconciliation) and is working adequately. Other functionalities and improvements had been refined (i.e. management of initial ‘bug fixes’) but NZ Council was currently negotiating with ESL moving from the ‘development’ phase to an ‘operational’ phase.

There are two other functionalities including the Designated Waters function and Salmon Fisheries Endorsement Licence will be developed before August this year (in addition to initial contract) including sensitive fisheries management and booking systems.

B. Research Project on Licence Category Pricing Review

A research brief had not yet been developed by NZ Council as was expected – and this would allow potential research providers to indicate interest in the project and provide a formal project proposal.

21. R3 / Marketing Update

Mr. Teal provided an overview of the R3 marketing actions:

A. Marketing Update – Prior to Game season and Early Season

- A brief summary of the actions undertaken by staff in terms of communications.
- Magazine articles developed for the Fish Issues 2023/2024 and for the Game Issue Magazine 2023
- Email to all previous season game licence holders and lapsed participants from two years prior – prior to the start of the season and before King’s Birthday Weekend.
- Prepare Game Pre-Season Newsletter for distribution in mid April
- Weekly Fishing Bulletin – timely information for anglers and to encourage activity
- Weekly Hunting Bulletin prior to season and each week in season

Draft and Unconfirmed

Discussion ensued on the various communications channels and what is now available to different groups and cohorts. This included discussion on the magazine (preferred by an older cohort, Women on the Fly use of Facebook, focused email communications, and active promotions of events, and use of You-Tube videos showing success (and how to achieve success).

After further discussion it was moved that

The R3/Marketing Report for April 2023 and May 2023 be received

Jennifer Yanko/Colin Shore

Carried

22. Communications Update

Mr. Teal provided a brief summary of key communications actions undertaken – including additional work that will result from the media campaign to maintain Fish and Game’s social licence.

23. Regional Plan Updates

Mr Teal provided an overview of regional planning processes in train:

A. Horizons RC – One Plan – Plan Change 2 Appeal Update

An update was provided on the PC2 Appeal - regarding risk matrix development and use of GMP (Good Management Practices). Mr Teal noted that Environment Court Mediation was not resolving all issues of transparency and the pathway does not necessarily achieve objectives in the Plan.

B. Horizons RC – Freshwater Futures Update

Mr Teal also noted that Horizons has engaged with recreational river users (including anglers) over summer to gauge usage and site coverage along catchments. Anglers had participated in the survey which showed the expected distribution of angling activity.

C. GWRC – proposed changes to Regional Policy Statement

Mr Teal noted that Fish and Game had submitted on the proposed changes to the GWRC Regional Policy Statement. Further submissions were sought from the public as part of the formal consultation process.

After further brief discussion it was moved that

The report on active regional planning process cases be received.

Paul Dewar/Malcolm Francis

Carried

24. Western Region Flood Protection Works Resource Consent Applications Update

Mr Teal provided an overview of three major applications:

1. Otaki and Waikanae River Catchments – no progress
2. Hutt River – Climate Resilience Projects – COVID Shovel Ready projects

These projects should be completed and funding will cease or be retracted.

3. Hutt River – RIVER LINK project update

A substantial project intended to recontour the Hutt River for about two kilometres near Melling Bridge has been granted resource consents directly at the Environment Court. This work will include substantial work in the river, and be prolonged (over 2 years).

Fish and Game will be involved in the specific monitoring of trout populations to ensure that trout spawning is not overly affected by works in the lower river, that might affect trout movements from the lower reaches to tributaries upstream used for trout spawning. Currently finalising contractual arrangements.

25. Wairarapa Moana Update

A. Treaty Settlement update

Transfer of Land Titles and establishment of Statutory Reserve Board occurred on 7 March 2023. The latter is required to meet within 6 months of establishment.

B. Exotic Fish Management Plan Progress

Suggestions for refinement and additions provided to consultant

C. Fish Removal Proposal

No further updates – GWRC recommendation was to continue

D. Fish Research Project Update

No further updates – DOC recommendation was to implement perch egg removal on other sites – Matthews Lagoon was initial site.

E. Jobs for Nature Project Management – Wairarapa Moana Research Funding and Restoration Plan

Planting of trees on margins completed for season – no reports yet on survival rates

F. JK Donald Wetland Project

Contact made with iwi

G. Stand Allocation and Management

Ballots undertaken and hunters are being provided direct guidance for stand location and expectations

H. Hut Management

No further updates

After brief discussion it was moved that

Council receive the report on Wairarapa Moana activities and management issues

Jim Cook/Andrew McGregor

Carried

26. Research Update

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of research projects and the NZ Fish and Game Research programme:

A. E-DNA Project

Massey University researchers have completed a manuscript outlining the protocols for sampling ready for field trials and use for sampling river water samples to sample environmental DNA (eDNA) and nuclearDNA for brown and rainbow trout in spawning streams. The E-DNA project which was essentially completed except for the submission of a journal paper.

B. Native Fish – Trout Interaction –

Ami Coughlan is presenting her findings at an international conference in February 2023. Two manuscripts are being prepared but anticipate the process to take several months until peer review completed and formal journal publishing. Council noted that this information needed to be socialised amongst anglers and wider public.

After brief discussion it was moved that

Council receive the research update report for June 2023

Malcolm Francis/Colin Shore

Carried

27. Licence Holder Engagement

Mr Teal provided an overview of various initiatives to engage with licence holders:

A. Junior Novice Fishing Days

- a. Otaki Site – Update of post event activity with fish still surviving and present at the site.

Draft and Unconfirmed

- b. Hokowhitu Lagoon – Update of post event activity with around 450 fish dying in 8 weeks following event date
- c. Marton Reservoir – Promotion of fisheries is positively encouraged by the Rangitikei District Council
- d. Capital Trout Centre– Regular events continue to be successfully run.

B. Woman on The Fly Programme

- It was noted that Women on the Fly programme Regular casting days planned and/or completed

After discussion it was moved that

The report on Licence Holder Engagement for June 2023 be received

Richard McIntyre/Malcolm Francis

Carried

28. Access issues update

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the continued hunting access for hunters at the Otaki River mouth for the 2023 Game Season.

29. Management Report 13 March 2023 to 31 May 2023

Mr. Teal highlighted to Council the current Wai 2200 Waitangi Tribunal claim that involved considerable areas on the western side of the region.

Mr Teal confirmed that there had been another mass mortality event of waterfowl at Lake Horowhenua due to botulism.

It was then moved that

Council receive the Management Report for period 13 March to 31 May 2023

Jim Cook/ Andrew McGregor

Carried

30. Fishing and Game Licence Sales

A. Fish Licence Sales for 2022/2023 Fishing Season

Mr Teal provided a brief summary of fish licence sales for the 2022/2023 Fishing Season being about 300 LEQs down compared to previous year. He referred to the cumulative licence sales graph which showed the previous two years were exceptional with high and early licence sales – but the sales pattern had reverted to the average prior to COVID. Discussion ensued on the potential effects of weather and subsequent swollen rivers for extended periods throughout the first part of the season.

B. Game Licence Sales for 2023 Season

Mr Teal provided a brief summary of game licence sales being down about 100 LEQs from the previous season. Discussion ensued on the potential effects of firearms re-licencing processes putting hunters (particularly older hunters) off re-licencing and therefore lost to all hunting activities. Councillor McIntyre did note the potential benefits in the firearms registry in that there have been examples identified of licenced firearm owners supplying gangs with firearms – and the registry may assist in tracking this particular source of illegal activity..

It was then moved

That the Fish Licence Sales Report for 2022/23 to 31 May 2023 and Game Season 2023 as at 31 May 2023 be received

Richard McIntyre/Colin Shore

Carried

31. Expenditure Report to 30 April 2023 and Transaction for March/April 2023

Mr. Teal provided an overview of the Financial Expenditure papers noting that:

- Legal Advice on implications of Treaty Settlement Acts for Fish & Game management and interests – confirm unbudgeted from reserves.
- Legal Advice required on GWRC proposed Regional Policy Statement which affects Regional Planning processes
- Vehicle Replacements – rReplaced vehicles will be sold through Turners Car Auction

It was then moved that

Council Receive and Accept the Expenditure Reports to 30 April 2023 and Financial Transactions for March and April 2023.

Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis

Carried

32. Correspondence and Media

A brief discussion was held on the Treaty Settlement formal apologies and formal signing for Kahungunu ki Wairarapa

It was moved to

Receive the correspondence and media items

Jennifer Yanko/Colin Shore

Carried

33. Wellington Conservation Board – Report and Update

Council noted that the next Conservation Board meeting was scheduled to be held on the 6 June 2023. There had been no agenda provided.

Draft and Unconfirmed

Further brief discussion confirmed Wellington Fish and Game's interpretation that there was a responsibility of the Conservation Board to provide direct liaison on issues - rather than relying on public forums in meetings as the place for dialogue.

34. General Business

Councillor McGregor provided some feedback from hunters regarding pre-season information provided by Fish and Game. Councillor McGregor noted that he had had several negative comments from hunters that had not had a particularly good start to the waterfowl season. These comments were often from experienced hunters (and respected influencers) that were critical of Fish and Game pre-season comments that they had developed a perception of over-hyping the season prospects to sell licences. Councillor McGregor noted that he was aware of all the supporting data and on-ground evidence obtained during banding – but there was a pervasive view developing from some of the hunters.

Councillor McGregor suggested another viewpoint to consider would be tracking of GPS tagged waterfowl to show how the birds were moving around the region. This would provide considerably more detail than the banding site and recovery site information that can be gathered currently. Discussion ensued on movements of waterfowl that are likely to follow crop harvest patterns.

There being no further items of general business the meeting was closed at 7.45pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Meeting on Tuesday, 8 August 2023 at Nga Manu Nature Reserve Facilities, 74 Nga Manu Nature Reserve Rd, Waikanae at 3pm.

Chairman_____

Date_____