

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton, on Saturday 9 December 2017 commencing at 11a.m.

AGENDA

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M. Young
Chairman
26/11/2017

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council **held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton,** **on Saturday 14 October 2017 commencing at 11.00am.**

PRESENT:

Chairman: M. Young.

Councillors: G. Annan, C. Carey, D. Cocks, A. Kerr, P. Shaw, C. Sherrard, E. Williamson,

Staff: B. Wilson, D. Klee, J. Dyer.

1. APOLOGIES

N. Juby, W. Howard, S. Smith, B. Smith, A. Sintenie, M. Davis, A. Daniel.

It was moved;

that the apologies be accepted.

Annan/Kerr CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 19 AUGUST 2017:

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of 19 August 2017 be accepted as a true and correct record.

Cocks/Shaw CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

5. CORRESPONDENCE:

Nil.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

Concern was expressed over the outcome of the Pukekohe Waste Water Treatment Plant consent hearing and the lack of input from WRC water quality experts. Mr Klee noted that he had requested a meeting with the science manager at the WRC to express Fish & Game's concerns.

In reply to a question, Mr Wilson informed that EcoFx would be pre baiting the Williamson Wetland later this month and putting out bait stations in early November.

Councillor Kerr expressed his disappointment over the lack of effort by pondholders in regards to the predator control programme, weed control, and general rubbish removal on the Williamson Wetland. Councillor Cocks disagreed, noting that it has been difficult to work on the wetland due to the wet winter and that it took some time for new pondholders to get established.

It was moved;

that a letter be sent to all pondholders reminding them of their responsibilities, especially weed control and taking part in predator control programmes.

Kerr/Sherrard CARRIED

The Chairman asked what could be done about the elevated levels of heavy metals in mallards. Mr Klee replied that the next stage of the research would be looking at the implications on human health. Preliminary results suggest that the flesh was ok to consume but offal consumption should be limited, similar to beef. There was also a need to track down the source path for copper. Cadmium from fertilizer is already acknowledged to be a problem in the Waikato.

Staff were thanked for the quality of the preseason fishing newsletter.

It was moved;

that the CE Bimonthly report and Financial Statements be accepted.

Annan/Williamson CARRIED

7. OSH REPORT:

It was moved;

that the OSH Report for October 2017 be accepted.

Shaw/Sherrard CARRIED

8. COUNCILLOR FIELD TRIP UPDATE:

Councillors Annan and Shaw noted that due to the requirements of the mallard banding programme they would probably be unable to attend the April 2017 Council meeting & fieldtrip if it was held in Owhango. Councillor Carey was also unsure if he could attend. It was agreed that the fieldtrip did not need to coincide with a Council meeting and thus a March date would be preferable.

The meeting rose for lunch at 12.05pm and resumed at 1.00pm.

9. GOVERNANCE/POLICY REVIEW:

Councillors discussed the governance review emphasising the current excellent relationship between Councillors and staff.

It was moved;

that the 2018 Governance Review be accepted.

Sherrard/Cocks CARRIED

that the adopted policies and positions be reaffirmed.

Cocks/Annan CARRIED

10. NZF&GC MEETING 29 SEPTEMBER 2017:

Councillor Sherrard summarised the discussion held by the NZF&GC at their recent meeting. He noted that the new CE, Martin Taylor, would be starting on 6th November.

11. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Councillor Annan expressed his appreciation for the very informative reports by Dr Daniel.

It was moved;

that the following reports be accepted:

- **Whakapapa & Whanganui River Angler Use Monitoring Study**
- **Whakapapa River: 2017 Drift Dive Survey & Angler Use Update**

Annan/Cocks CARRIED

Councillor Kerr enquired as to whether Council owned the Polaris ATV used in the Angler Use Monitoring Study, and if so whether it was being serviced regularly. Mr Wilson replied that the ATV was purchased at a discount from Polaris and it was being serviced annually.

Mr Dyer informed that he had checked an angler on the way to the meeting who was participating in the annual Waikato River Fishing Competition. The angler had caught a large brown trout and he expressed his opinion that the brown trout caught this year were in exceptional condition.

Councillor Annan informed that he had been asked by Councillor Juby to raise the issue of a User Group fieldtrip around the F&G wetlands next year. It was agreed that a midweek fieldtrip could be arranged if there was sufficient interest from User Groups.

Councillor Sherrard advised that Southland F&G Councillors carried out the gamebird harvest survey phone calls and he suggested that this was a good opportunity for Councillors to talk to licence holders. Mr Klee replied that he was always looking for people to do the phone surveys and any assistance from Councillors would be much appreciated.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 1.30pm.

15 November 2019

Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Pondholder

Dear Pond-holder

At their October 2017 meeting, concern was expressed by Fish & Game Councillors at the state of some ponds on Council's wetlands especially in regards to noxious weeds and rubbish left over from the game season. Concern was also expressed that not all pondholders were participating in working bees and predator control programmes.

The conditions of tenure are sent out to pond-holders each year detailing your obligations in regards to active pond and maimai maintenance. The requirements are not onerous and we'd hope that all pondholders give their full attention this summer to making sure that they are fully compliant.

The main requirements are:

1. That all maimais are of a sound and safe construction that is OSH compliant.
2. Maimai standards shall be those stated in the F&G pamphlet titled "*Maimai Construction Guidelines*". The maimai floor area shall not exceed 10 metres square (area under the roof). Maimais larger than 10 metres square will need to be adjusted either voluntarily or, failing that, will be done by F&G appointed agents at the maimai owner's expense.
3. That all maimais are in a tidy and respectable condition in terms of how the public and other hunters would reasonably judge them.
4. That any walkways to and from ponds are in a safe and generally unobstructed condition.
5. That all ponds are well maintained, especially as regards to weed and willow control.
6. That pondholders are continuing to take an active role in maintaining their pond sites.
7. That any rubbish in the vicinity of the pond-site is removed at the close of each hunting season, regardless of how it got there.
8. That at least one of the pondholder partners from each pond has attended up to five working bees per year or made a suitable alternative arrangement (for instance by undertaking and completing a set task to a satisfactory standard).

Fish & Game are tasked with ensuring that balloted ponds on Council Wetlands meet their conditions of tenure which are sent out to pond-holders each year. Fish & Game staff will be inspecting ponds over the summer to make sure that the tenure conditions are fully complied with.

Please get back to me if you have any queries on the above. If you wish to relinquish your pond site for someone who is keener and more willing to meet our minimum criteria, then please contact us well before the game season.

Yours sincerely

Ben Wilson
Chief Executive

Bi Monthly Managers Report

Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Meeting December 2017

OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Project 1111 Drift Diving

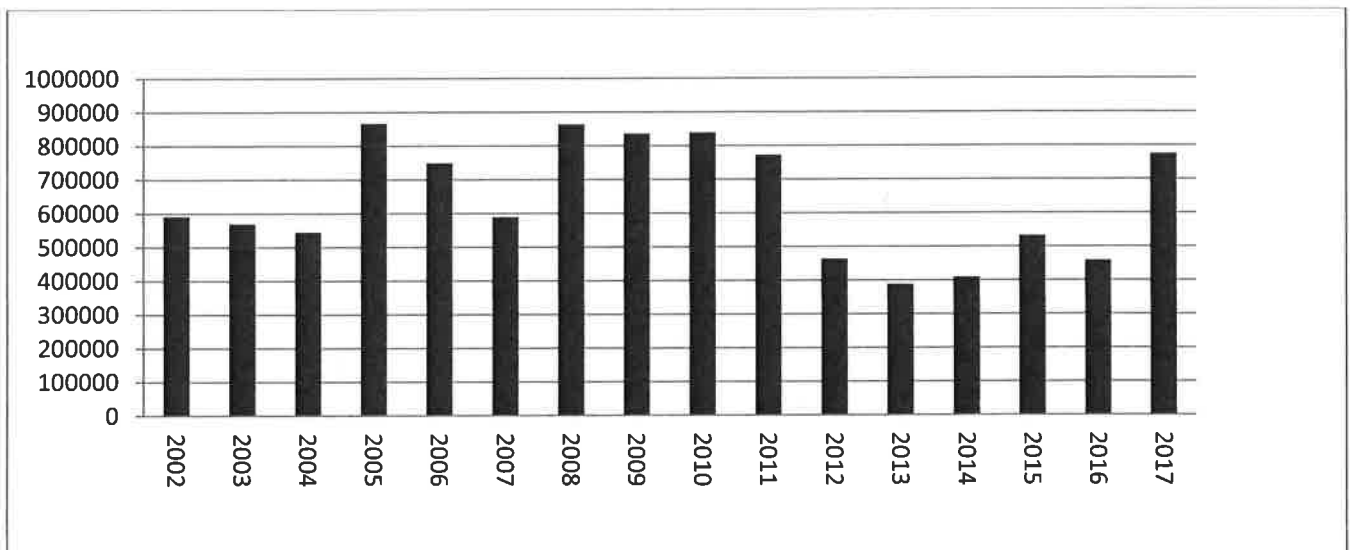
The annual drift diving program has been scheduled for the last two weeks in January 2018 and will include staff members Anna, Mischa and David.

Project 5117 Gamebird Research

David attended the Game bird research meeting in Wellington. Part of the discussion revolved around developing a long term plan or strategy to ensure that we had clear list of priorities and set a pathway for continuation of current work streams. Updates were received on other projects and a list of future projects was developed. Jenn is continuing to work on her publications with the nesting ecology paper due for submission at the end of November. David raised the issue of how this research would be disseminated to our licence holders and highlighted the need for a national PR campaign. Jenn and David have subsequently put together a very brief and simple set of messages focusing on the issue of low hen survival as a starting point on where hunters can focus their efforts to increase duck populations.

Heavy Metals Study: At the time of writing David is just doing the final edits on Katie’s thesis which should be submitted by the end of the month. A copy will be sent to councillors once completed.

Population Estimates: As councillors will recall, most metrics used to gauge hunter success (total harvest and ducks/hour) were up this year. Despite this, based on banding results our harvest rates were relatively low. This means that despite shooting more ducks overall, we did not appear to harvest a greater percentage of our total population. Linken-Peterson estimates are given below and indicate an increase in 2017. This has undoubtedly been helped by climatic conditions over the past two years. Reports received by staff are indicating a lot of large clutches late in brood rearing and there are plenty of juvenile fledged ducks around, which is becoming an issue for crops.



Project 5121 Fish Harvest Surveys

Tagging: Whanganui River tag returns are trickling in, but the initial tagging data is largely unreported. Staff will have to chase up Nigel Juby to get the data.

Project 1161 Trout Releases

Tokoroa, Lake Moananui: The tagged fish released for the Tokoroa kids fishing day were a great success with 3 of the 10 fish were caught.

Lake Arapuni: The annual Lake Arapuni release of 2000 rainbow trout was conducted October 8th.

OUTPUT 2 HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

Project 1211 R.M.A.

Healthy Rivers (PC 1) Ongoing: The Council has now released a Draft Summary of Submissions (a document many hundreds of pages long). Anna started a review of this and putting together a further submission document. The Council has indicated that the formal notification for further submissions will occur early to mid 2018.

Clevedon quarry expansion: We submitted on Fulton Hogan Limited's application to expand their existing quarry at 546 McNicol Road near Clevedon. Of concern to us was the affect the expansion would have on the Wairoa River which is located directly opposite the quarry site. The Wairoa is the closest river containing trout to Auckland City and is the only major trout stream in the Auckland area holding both rainbow and brown trout.

Mischa and Adam have met with Fulton Hogan twice to negotiate specific consent conditions that will reduce the risks of sediment entering the Wairoa River. For example they have agreed to seal part of the road that is currently unsealed, and to introduce a truck wash for trucks before they exit the quarry site. They have also agreed to monitor the turbidity of the treated stormwater discharge to the Wairoa River. We are in the final stages of working out an agreement and do not expect to speak at the Auckland Council hearing on the application.

Matamata quarry: Matamata Metal Supplies Ltd operate a quarry at the end of Barton Road, Okauia, Matamata. This site is located on the western side of the Kaimai ranges, north of the SH29 to Tauranga. The quarry has been in operation continuously since the 1950's and is now seeking to renew its resource consents from the Waikato Regional Council. The proposal is essentially to continue operations as they have been undertaken for some time. They contacted us as a stakeholder to get our opinion on their Assessment of Environment Effects. Mischa replied stating that overall we are happy with what is being proposed; however we do have a number of concerns with the expansion of the quarry, especially the discharge of stormwater and its effects on the Waihou River, which haven't been properly addressed in the AEE. We're also concerned with term of the proposed consent. We will look to be making a submission on the application once it becomes notified.

Northland Regional Plan: Mischa prepared a comprehensive submission on the Northland Regional Plan with the assistance of Northland F&G staff and the national RMA coordinator,

Peter Wilson. The Northland Region is not well known for its trout fisheries but does have a number of large significant wetlands and lakes. The main concern with the proposed plan is a lack of protection for constructed wetlands including the proposal to make constructed wetland drainage a permitted activity. The submission also addressed the need for buffer zones and setbacks for cultivation in order to reduce the effects of sedimentation in waterways. Water quality issues were also addressed including the need for improved monitoring in order to help set water quality limits.

Cleanfill site: There is a proposal to build a very large “clean-fill” dump at 62 Bluff Road near Pokeno. We have recently made visit to the site and have serious concerns with the landfill site which is clearly crumbling into the valley below. The two streams in this valley feed through a single culvert under the SH1 expressway into the Fish & Game’s Cathcart Wetland so the risks to our water quality are obvious. We are not yet sure whether this application will be publically notified however we are insisting to the council that we are an affected party so at the minimum we should be able to have a say. We have recently been contacted by the applicant who has provided further information on the site including an Ecological Mitigation Plan, an Ecological Assessment of Environmental Effects and a Geotech Report addressing recent slips within the area. There are also a couple of plans showing existing waterways and proposed mitigation. We will continue discussing with the applicant our concerns with the proposal.

Waikare Subdivision: Anyone who has been through Te Kauwhata lately will know there is a lot of house building going on at a number of sites. However Lakeside Developments have assumed there is significantly more demand yet and they’ve applied for a Private Plan Change to build a 194ha subdivision beside Lake Waikare, off Scott Road. While there is a proposed band around the lake edge being offered as a buffer, the lake surroundings (currently green pasture, rolling hills and well established trees) will forever be changed. This brings to question; is the intent of the RMA being respected when the following would seem to rule such developments out completely:

Matters of National Importance:

In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall recognize and provide for the following matters of national importance:

(a) the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:

The way it instead seems to be interpreted by local councils is that only a token strip of the natural character need be protected.

This is a very popular hunting area and urbanisation so close to the lake edge is likely to create a number of problems.

Waikare Section 128 Review: Work briefs and scoping have been developed for the two preferred options. This work has commenced and will provide a detailed technical feasibility assessment of these options.

Whangamarino Weir Section 128 Review: David and Anna met with DOC and WRC representatives to discuss the review process and determine a way forward. It was agreed at the meeting that there was a need to clarify some technical aspects of the review and the parties and their experts would focus for now. Funding (\$50,000) has been sought from the National Legal Fund for this project.

Waikare/Whangamarino Catchment Management Plan: David attended the open day held in Te Kauwhata and highlighted some of the opportunities that landowners currently have in regards to wetland restoration in these catchments based on works F&G is currently conducting.

Whangamarino Weir, High Court action: Funding (\$30,000) has been sought from the National Legal Fund for this defence. We have been working closely with solicitor Sarah Ongley (who is also assisting with the Section 128 review) and barrister Susan Hughes QC in the preparation of our defence.

Waikare/Whangamarino Catchment Management Plan: A meeting of the “Leadership Group”, which includes Fish and Game, was held by the Regional Council. We observed the same procedural issues we had seen in past meetings stemming from the fact that there is no overall mission statement or objective for the group, leaving it open to being dominated by individual members’ agendas, with no structure to move forward in a logical progression. Anna raised this concern. The Edmeades report was presented and while Regional Council science staff emphasised that they did not endorse the report, they did not directly address its flaws. We have requested the Council provide us with any technical feedback given by Council science staff on the report and pointed out some of the parts of the report which are indisputably incorrect and were not corrected subsequent to review by Council scientists (mostly relating to the planning requirements in Plan Change 1). Given the lack of process for the group, there is a risk about how this report is used in the future, particularly in regards to defining the scope of the Leadership Group’s work or the CMP itself. There has been a change of leadership on this matter at the Council, and we expect to see some improvement (ie. a more defined process, and objectives) but are prepared to pull out of the Leadership Group if that process continues to be something that we don’t gain value from. In this event we would still feed into the CMP itself, but avoid wasting time at the leadership level.

Te Awamutu Waste Water Treatment Plant: Pre application liaison was undertaken with Waipa DC representatives and consultants.

Fonterra Te Rapa and Fonterra Te Awamutu consent applications: The Te Awamutu Fonterra consent application for its discharge into the Mangapiko stream has been notified with submissions due mid December. The issue of concern is primarily the continued elevated temperature of the discharge creating a thermal barrier for trout. We are also looking into how the contaminant load is likely to change; the reductions projected do not occur until seven years into the consent. Anna is reviewing documents and starting a submission.

Fonterra Te Rapa has not yet been notified, but we expect it to be in early 2018.

Inghams application: Discussions are commencing with key stakeholders to determine/ establish projects which would be suitable for the mitigation money Inghams are required to

put into water quality and biodiversity values in the Firth of Thames Catchment. There are some exceptional opportunities on both WRC and DOC land in the catchment in regards to the retirement of pastoral lease land and restoration back into wetlands. It is hoped that both those stakeholders will be amenable to working towards developing some large scale projects.

Flax Block Water levels: There has been a lot of dialogue between WRC, DOC and ourselves regarding the issues around the flax block weir and recently conducted earthworks. Unbeknown to F&G staff, WRC took a bulldozer down the flax block stop bank to reinstate the 'constellation drains' which consist of a number of shallow scallops that facilitate water entering and exiting the block. The weir boards were also removed at the time leading to a large reduction in water levels in the wetland. We have some concerns regarding these activities and the fact they were considered to be permitted. There also appears to be a divergence in opinion about the agreed water levels regime in the Wetland.

The information we have on file shows that the fluctuating levels that WRC are referencing in their correspondence to justify the current works were interim levels set in 1996 post development and pending a hydrological assessment. This was conducted post the 1998 flood event and referenced in further correspondence clearly stating that DOC would be maintaining a year round 1.7RL weir height and a legal opinion indicates that this is an existing use right. Subsequently, the WRC operations committee based on recommendations from WRC staff agreed in 2000 that given the negligible impact on flooding an "initial water level of 1.7RL was appropriate in the eastern block". At the time DOC wanted to raise the level to 1.9 RL, however the committee suggested that this would require resource consent. We have requested that in the interim, until such a time when the full scheme assessment has been completed and we actually get to see what effect, if any, various wetland water levels have on flooding, that the weir be re-instated at 1.7RL. Once all the information is on the table we can sit down and work out a joint management plan for the site to ensure an appropriate water level regime is maintained in the wetland that is agreeable to all parties.

Te Kauwhata Proposed Private Plan Change 20: Anna drafted a submission on the Private Plan Change application. The main points were:

- Reverse sensitivity provisions to protect existing hunting activities on Lake Waikare and to ensure notification in the event that consents competing activities are applied for (ie an equestrian centre, which as proposed, would fall under a Permitted Activity rule, and a lakeside walkway).
- Ensuring the development enables no further degradation of Lake Waikare.
- Taking steps to mitigate the effects of increased cat and pest numbers on waterfowl populations.

Te Kauwhata Waste Water Treatment Plant: Things are moving rapidly with the success of the infrastructure application and Lakeside Development. The stake holder group is now having monthly meetings with WDC staff. WDC have told us there are only two preferred options, however any technical information other than a broad brush economic assessment has not been provided. David expressed his frustrations that the group, as primary stakeholders, have been kept in the dark in regards to the decision making process and have simply been told these will be the two options moving forward. That is not consultation or collaboration.

Contrary to what we were told at a previous meeting it does not appear that a full BPO assessment has been conducted and despite continual reassurances to the contrary, one of the preferred options is a continued discharge to the lake.

The second option is to discharge to the Waikato via Huntly, however we have not seen any information regarding the potential effects on the Waikato River. Huntly would require a major upgrade in order to reduce contaminant loading and if the proposal were to take the waste out of Waikare and dump into the River instead, that would be an unacceptable outcome. At the last meeting we were told that preliminary indications are that WDC would be able to discharge at Huntly (post upgrade) without any increases in contaminant load to the River. If this were to be the case then we would naturally support such a proposal. As always the devil will be in the detail and we await a full assessment including potential environmental effects.

Fonterra Tirau: I attended the official opening of the “state-of-the art” stormwater treatment system for the Fonterra Tirau dairy factory. They spent \$4 million, so it was interesting to see where the money went. The main treatment involves a wetland swale that is 65m long, and stormwater is treated by sub-surface filtration (sand with roots from Oio plants).

Project 1221 Council Land

Eastern Whangamarino Predator Control; David has continued to liaise with the groups representatives to try and establish a coherent programme.

Project 1231 Non Council Land

Water Study: Adam has laid out a new plan to sample Whanganui river tributaries and engaged in an agreement with the University of Waikato to process the suspended solid samples monthly for two years.

Whangamarino Weir: Questions surrounding the history of the weir uncovered quite a lot of other useful information in an archive search. In particular there is now an online service called Retrolens. This has aerial photographs going back to 1944 and up to the mid 1970’s that record the land-use changes that took place when the various drainage schemes were started. These can be freely downloaded and enlarged.

Small Scale Community Initiatives Fund: David lodged funding applications in conjunction with landowners and F&G clubs in order to fund predator control projects on Private, DOC and F&G land. Two of the 3 projects were funded.

Project 1235 Trees

Protection for plants: Following a tip-off that green plastic “Polylogic” sleeves would prevent pukeko pulling out plants, John tried this at the Piggott Block to protect young F&G trees. Last year pukeko removed dozens of trees planted without this protection, this year none. So the early indications are this works. However the sleeves do not prevent bindweed and other lush competing grasses and ferns from trying to smother these same small trees. These have since been freed up but will need rechecking again to remove the growth around them. Next year we’ll experiment again using carpet strips to suppress weeds, (as used last

year) but this time in conjunction with the plastic sleeves. It might all get a bit complicated but if there's a will, there's a way. A number of these trees, water oaks, tree-lucerne and swamp cypress have been planted on the Piggott Block to stop quite pronounced river bank erosion there. Large scale pampas spraying has meant, apart from other benefits, that occasional 4WD vehicle access to this planting site is again possible and that long journeys with wheel barrows full of trees etc are consigned to the past.

Puriri trees historically were popular with grey ducks for nesting in the flax-like epiphytes that grow on their branches, especially where these were growing over water. By having some flowers and seed on for much of the year puriri also feed berry-eating birds through hard winter months. However puriri trees were popular as fence posts and similar uses as it's a wood that doesn't rot easily, so these trees are rare on the ground these days. There are just 3 left in the Piggott Block, (the Piggott family were sawmillers), and one of the puriri there hangs over the Waikato River. On the to-do list is to cut back competing alder trees to encourage it and also to collect "eco-sourced" berries from these 3 trees to plant more of them along the river bank. Keith Smith from the Hamilton F&G Club has kindly offered to raise these for us.

OUTPUT 3 PARTICIPATION

Project 1311 Access negotiation

River Access: Adam has dropped off a flyer to landowners and real-estate agents on the Whakapapa River informing them that Fish & Game would like to negotiate or purchase access to the river. There has been no response to date. Adam has explored access on the upper Waipa River and although there is legal access the route is on a bull farm that is not safe for the public.

Boat Access Ramps: John assisted Waikato District Council with a list of local boat ramps used by gamebird hunters to access wetlands, lakes and rivers. We also commented on the poor condition of many of these.

Awakino River: We've met several times with NZTA over the last year to discuss their proposal for major works on State Highway 3 alongside the Awakino River. We've emphasised that this is a good opportunity to enhance public access to the river. The proposed works will consist of two new bridges and will bypass the existing single lane tunnel. They've also agreed to a new Rest Area from which a footpath will run alongside the river on the old road.

Project 1341 Other Publications

Adam has been writing the monthly reel life.

OUTPUT 4 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Project 1431 Liaison advocacy

Kids Fishing Days: Adam assisted the Tokoroa Fishing Association with their kids fishing day and will assist DoC in a fishing day for Ngahinapouri School.

Open Day Lake Ngaroto: Adam also attended an open day at Lake Ngaroto with Councillors Annan and Shaw looking at constructed wetlands.

Project 1441 Displays/Promotions

Facebook: Staff were encouraged at the national F&G staff meeting to consider using Facebook to promote our good works. One such post by John Dyer described local Waikato experiments with nesting boxes. Both here and overseas, starling competition for such cavities can become problematic to duck usage rates. A nest-cam here watched a nest box from outside and another from inside. These showed an India myna bird (a close relation to the starling), checking that the coast was clear, then entering and deliberately trying to cover the duck eggs up with nest material and also with scrounged rubbish such as bits of plastic. The duck ultimately won the contest for the box and hatched out her own eggs, generating about 7,500 game camera images to sort in the process. However these photos told the story of what had happened.

Overseas researchers have used mirrors as well as flashing strobe and other lights inside starling nest boxes to test if such modifications will discourage them, but without success. What did seem to work was a skylight in the lid made from 100x100mm semi-opaque fibreglass, (that transmitted nearly 90% of available light). Starlings in some areas didn't like this but the ducks didn't seem to mind. Another trick successfully tested was to attach a smaller starling nest box onto the duck nest box. The male starling invariably chose the more starling-suited smaller box and then defended the area around both boxes from other starlings, thus letting the duck get on with it without interference. This doubled duck nest box use. A nest hole entrance on starling boxes no bigger than 42mm ensures myna birds can't get in. The question is, in a NZ context, can the starling with its own box then see off the more aggressive myna from the adjoining duck nest box too? A number of these boxes are being installed to find out.

Starlings and presumably also mynas in NZ are host to bird mites and also European chicken fleas, (*Ceratophyllus gallinae*), which might account for those 7,500 photos of a wriggling, frequently preening duck! More worryingly, fleas and mites can kill day-old ducklings, another reason to keep nest competitors out. Telling a hen-flea from a rat, cat or dog flea requires a microscope. Mr Dyer has just picked up an ex Victoria University microscope off Trade Me for the princely sum of \$47 - and it comes with a spare as parts!

Special mention should also be made of one of our Councillors promoting a new ferret trap also through Facebook. This cage trap is doing sterling work beside the Opuatia Wetland and hopefully other hunters will be inspired to repeat this elsewhere.

OUTPUT 5 LAW ENFORCEMENT

Project 1511 Ranging

Lake Pupuke: Adam patrolled this lake in Auckland and encountered three anglers that wanted more fishing opportunities in the Auckland area

Ranger Manual: This is being updated by Anthony van Dorp at Eastern F&G. John Dyer was asked to review it, and made suggestions. Rather worryingly it points to the direction that Health & Safety is taking us. For instance, rangers are unlikely to be able to continue to use their own boats ranging, unless of course these are surveyed and the operator approved by Maritime NZ. Ranging after dark will now need special permission and also rangers cannot range and hunt at the same time. This last point may need some latitude. For instance, if a ranger sees hunters approach a boat ramp and is in possession of a shotgun, he need only lock it away in his car inside a slip or case to be clearly “unarmed”, should anyone care to argue otherwise. With so many maimais in this region offshore, the two Fish & Game boats are clearly going to be getting a lot of use come opening weekend.

Project 1531 Legal

Grey Teal Sale: John followed up a Facebook comment about someone breeding grey teal being prosecuted by DoC for selling them, “a couple of years ago”. He tracked down the Hamilton individual whose daughter in Te Kauwhata had put a few teal up for sale to defray his costs, actually about 15 years ago. DoC set about investigating this back then and, not then knowing the relationship, asked the father beforehand if he would mind holding any birds they seized! All a bit of a mix-up but it now begs 2 questions: It used to be legal for waterfowl permit holders to sell their birds to other permit holders to defray costs. Is that still the case? Also, this individual also breeds wood ducks. He was told by the DoC officers then, “You can do what you like with them. If you want to release them we can’t stop you”. Were they right?

The Wildlife Act imposes heavy penalties for releasing wildlife illegally. However it does not consider that domestic birds, (defined as “any domestic fowl, duck or goose”), are legally “wildlife”. If it did, everyone with free range farm turkeys, ducks, geese and chooks would be breaking the law. But wood ducks? Wikipedia describes these birds, which have been in captivity for several centuries in Europe and at least a century in NZ as “semi-domesticated”. So perhaps the officers were right. It is something that would be very helpful to know.

OUTPUT 8: PLANNING REPORTING

Project 1841 National Liaison

Adam attended the Freshwater Sciences Society conference in Hamilton and presented a paper on the Angler Use Study.

**B. Wilson,
Chief Executive**