



AGENDA

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

17 OCTOBER 2020

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton on Saturday 17 October 2020 commencing at 11 a.m.

AGENDA

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* Denotes attachments

G. Annan
Chairman

28/09/20

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton
on Saturday 15 August 2020 commencing at 11am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: G. Annan

Councillors: E. Williamson (via Zoom), P. Shaw, C. Sherrard, S. Smith, G. Avery, N. Juby,
W. Howard.

Staff: A. Daniel, B. Wilson, D. Klee, J. Dyer (via Zoom)

Visitors: P. Hardy (DoC)

1. APOLOGIES

D. Cocks, A. Kerr, B. Moore

It was moved;
that the apologies be accepted.

Howard/Smith - CARRIED

The chairman requested a minute's silence in the memory of the late Murray Young.

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 16th May 2020:

It was moved;
that the minutes of the previous meeting of 16th May 2020 be accepted as a true and
correct record.

Juby/Smith - CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Councillor Smith requested an update on the Open Country Dairy discharge application. Mr Wilson replied that Open Country Dairy had lodged an appeal with the Environment Court, which Fish & Game had joined. But it was not known whether Open Country Dairy would go through with the case. It was up to the Waikato Regional Council to

defend their decision but it was crucial for Fish and Game to be there as well. However, funding could be an issue, since this was not the type of legal action that would usually be funded at a national level.

Councillor Juby asked what percentage of fish licence sales were from non-resident anglers. Mr Wilson replied that non-resident anglers contributed about \$50,000 of fish licence revenue, some 10% of sales.

5. COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

A letter was tabled from Steve Dickson who stated that the timing and duration of the 2020 duck season under the Covid-19 restrictions was a “whole hearted success” and he recommended that these changes should be permanent. Mr Dickson ‘s letter generated considerable discussion amongst Councillors who agreed that the changes appeared to produce better conditioned ducks and certainly better hunting conditions. Mr Klee observed that it would be difficult to determine the impact of the changes on the duck population after just one season. Councillor Sherrard expressed his opinion that the South Island regions would vigorously oppose any change from an early May opening.

Mr Wilson was asked to reply to Mr Dickerson thanking him for his recommendation.

Letters were tabled from the Chairman of the Central South Island Region, Dr Andrew Simpson, and the Chair of the Otago Region, Monty Wright, to the Chair of the NZ Council Paul Shortis criticizing the decision of the NZ Council not to print the Sportfish Regulation booklet for the 2020/21 season.

Councillor Juby acknowledged that the NZ Council had made an error on this issue by not consulting with the regions before making a decision.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S BI-MONTHLY REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

Dr Daniel noted that the access issue to the upper Whakapapa River had not been resolved and discussions were ongoing with the landowners.

The Chairman thanked Dr Daniel for his presentation at the recent AGM of the Te Awamutu Fish & Game Association.

Councillor Williamson enquired whether the wetland that was being restored with funds from the Provincial Growth Fund would be available for hunting. Mr Klee replied that the wetland project was on private land and thus any hunting would be at the discretion of the landowner.

General discussion ensued over prosecution costs. Mr Wilson acknowledged that our costs were high but that equally the fines imposed were generally much higher than in other regions. Whether we should do more of the prosecution work in-house would be something that would be considered in the staff review planned for later this year.

Councillor Smith enquired as to whether the recent increase in road user tax would affect the vehicle budget. Mr Wilson agreed that it probably would but he couldn't state by how much and he would have to report back to councillors on this.

It was moved;

that the Chief Executive's bi-monthly report be accepted.

Shaw/Smith - CARRIED

7. NZ COUNCIL MEETINGS OF JUNE AND JULY 2020:

Councillors were very concerned about the proposal by NZ Councillor Noel Birchall to discontinue the mallard research fund. The fund had been established by the imposition of an extra dollar on the game licence specifically tagged for mallard research. It was also emphasized that funds should accumulate as research was expensive and substantial funds were required to do worthwhile research. Concerns were expressed that the NZ Council does not appreciate the concerns of game bird hunters and the potential bad publicity resulting from any cutback in the mallard research fund.

8. MINISTERIAL REVIEW:

Councillors discussed the ongoing national review, especially whether it was desirable to amalgamate with adjacent regions. Councillors also discussed the difficulties with having iwi representation on the Auckland/Waikato Council given the large number of iwi in the region.

The meeting rose for lunch at 12:45pm and resumed at 1:15pm.

9. COVID-19 SUBSIDY:

Councillors acknowledged that the NZ Council had determined that it was legal for regional Fish and Game Councils to retain the subsidy if the criteria were met.

Concerns were expressed over the reduction of income both at a regional and national level, especially due to the absence of non-resident anglers.

10. OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN AND BUDGET CONFIRMATION FOR 2020/21:

Councillors discussed the revised Operational Work Plan and budget for 2020/21.

It was moved;

that the Operational Work Plan for 2020/21 and the budget of \$795,379 be approved.
Shaw/Smith – CARRIED

11. 2019 NATIONAL GAME BIRD HUNTER SURVEY:

Mr McDougall's report was tabled with Councillors noting the overall downward trend in harvest and hours hunted.

It was moved;

that Mr McDougall be thanked for his work on the annual game bird hunter surveys and his comprehensive report.
Shaw/Smith – CARRIED

12. STAFF DRIFT DIVING REPORTS:

The Chairman thanked Dr Daniel for his very readable reports and especially the clear analysis of data. In reply to a question, Dr Daniel agreed to consider repeating historical trout spawning surveys in the Mangatutu Stream.

13. KING COUNTRY PARADISE SHELDUCK SEASON:

My Dyer's report was tabled. After discussion:

It was moved;
that

- The King Country special season be dependent on trend counts.
- That the first season should be for one weekend only (27/28 February 2021)
- 10 birds limit
- Hours to be 6:30am to 8pm.
- No shooting within 200m from a municipal wastewater treatment plant.
- \$5 permit charge.

Avery/Smith – CARRIED

14. WARD RANCH UPDATE:

Mr Wilson updated the meeting on the High Court action by Ward Ranch against Council and DoC.

15. OSH UPDATE:

Mr Wilson introduced his OSH report. He was asked how he kept track of field officers when they were out of cell phone reception. Mr Wilson replied that all three field officers had satellite text units.

It was moved;

that the August 2020 Osh report be approved.

Shaw/Howard – CARRIED

16. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Councillor Shaw expressed his concern over the location of some maimais on Lake Ngaroto next to the popular walking track around the lake. Mr Klee agreed to contact the relevant hunters about making modifications to the maimai to rule out any danger to track users.

In the opinion of Councillor Shaw, many landowners were still feeding ponds immediately prior and during the season, and the relevant landowners were probably unaware of the regulation. Councillors agreed that more publicity was required about the ban, including in rural publications.

Mr Wilson's recent email to Councillors on the new National Environmental Standards for Freshwater were tabled. Councillors expressed their concern over the impact of the new regulations on landowners and game bird hunters. Councillor Juby informed the meeting that he had passed on Mr Wilson's email to NZ Councillors.

It was moved;

that the NZ Council Chairman be informed of Council's concerns with the new regulations, and Council's disappointment that the regulations were developed without any meaningful input on wetland issues from Fish & Game.

Avery/Howard – CARRIED

Mr Wilson stated that the new regulations would impose considerable demands on Fish and Game including the necessity of obtaining consents for routine earthworks and maintenance work on wetland structures.

The Chairman enquired as to whether the current staffing structure was fit for purpose in relation to these extra demands. Mr Wilson replied that clearly a review was required, and he was especially concerned that recent incidents, such as the vandalising of the Whangamarino weir, were occurring with increasing frequency.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 2:30pm.

16 September 2020

Chairmen
Fish and Game Councils

Re: Non Resident Levy

Dear Chairmen

1. At the 147th meeting of the New Zealand Council made the following decision.

That we rescind the previous motions on Non Resident Fish Levies and agree that the Non Residents Levy be treated as licence income for the budgeting process and that all Non Resident Reserves become general reserves in the regions in which they are currently held.

2. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with some context on this decision and the impact it will have on financial statements and budgets.
3. The levy was introduced in the 2014-2015 licence year, the levy was applied to the adult whole season fish licence. The levy amount was the difference between the resident whole season licence and the non-resident licence, less GST less commission @ 4.5%. In September 2015 NZC resolved that each region maintain a dedicated fund of the levies collected in their region.
4. From 2014-2018 the levy generated on average \$179,857.00 per year. In the 2018-19 season non-resident licences were introduced in Junior, Child and adult day classifications, this has resulted in a further \$348,158 increase in N/R reserves shown in the annual accounts of the regions as at 31/08/2019, a total of \$801,459.
5. For the 2019-20 year the NZC increased the nett levy by approx. another \$6.64 per adult licence fee, this has, based on the Licence Sales Report of 18/06/2020 resulted in a further \$344,242 being add to the N/R reserves in the regions giving a total of \$1,145,701, less any expenditure in the current year, only \$21,862 has been approved through the budget process.

6. When it was first proposed the Minister's was comfortable with the levy being used for the improvement of back country fisheries management as suggested by NZC. Recently, the Minister has confirmed that the NR levy is able to be used for any fisheries management just like other licence revenue.
7. As at the 31/08/19 there had been \$1,100,687 in levies collected since 2014 and \$299,228 spent, leaving \$801,459 sitting in regions reserves with a further \$344,242 being collected as at 18/06/20 in this financial year, a reserves total of \$1,145,701.
8. The NZC decision means:
 - a. The existing NR funds should become part of the general reserves in the region where they are currently held.
 - b. All licence income will to be budgeted as income for the management of F&G.
 - c. Expenditure for sensitive or back country fisheries or any other fisheries outside of normal operations should be through the contestable funding process.
 - d. The Standing Finance Committee, as part of our Covid financial management have advised that all reserves, except restricted reserves, are to be included in the calculation when calculating the approved 20% of approved budget that is required to be held in reserves.
9. We accept that the NZC decisions amend our current policy to respond to the current financial situation.
10. The NZC decision has an impact on Financial Statements & Budgets as follows:
 - a. *2019/20 Year end Accounts*

At present the Non resident levy Reserve or Back Country reserves sits as a Dedicated Reserve within the Equity section of the Balance Sheet. In the 2019/20 year end accounts this is to be transferred to a General reserve. There will need to be a note within the notes to the Financial Statements, stating the change of the reserve from a Dedicated to a General reserve.



b. *2020/21 Year end – Budgets and Accounts*

As budgets have been set for all Regions, they will be no change in the allocated budget for both income and expenditure. Any non resident income will be treated as Licence income and does not need to be a separated line item within revenue in the Profit and Loss. No Transfer is required to a Reserve.

c. *2021/22 Year end – Budgets and Accounts*

Revenue from the Non resident portion of the licence will be included in the total licence forecast. If there is a surplus in funds from forecast Revenue to Budgets then this surplus will form part of the Contestable Fund pool.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Carmel or myself.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Taylor".

Martin Taylor
Chief Executive
NZ Fish and Game Council

Ben Wilson

From: Ian Hadland
Sent: Tuesday, 29 September 2020 12:45 pm
To: Martin Taylor
Cc: Regional Managers; Paul Shortis; Monty Wright; Colin Weatherall
Subject: RE: Non Resident Levy Changes

Hi there Martin,

Thank you for the Non Resident Levy paper which was discussed at our last full Council meeting. Council were made aware that this wasn't a consultation paper but they still wished to relay the following comments;

- Otago Council wanted to express its concern that a matter which has such a significant implication on regional reserves and revenue allocation, and is essentially a change in a well established norm, should be done without regional consultation.
- That Otago Council agreed to retain the Non resident reserve as just that and declined to amalgamate it with general reserves.
- The Council felt that the funds were gathered in good faith from overseas anglers, many whom know that the premium they pay is directed back into waters of interest to them. As such project spending from that reserve for that purpose will continue and NZC will be notified of any spending in the usual way.

Thank you

Ian Hadland | **Chief Executive**

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Otago Fish & Game Council
PO Box 76
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From: Martin Taylor <mtaylor@fishandgame.org.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 16 September 2020 8:56 AM
To: Regional Chairs <regionalchairmen@fishandgame.org.nz>
Cc: Regional Managers <regionalmanagers@fishandgame.org.nz>; Paul Shortis <paulshortis55@gmail.com>
Subject: Non Resident Levy Changes

Dear Regional Chairs

Please find attached a letter setting out the changes to the NR levy situation following NZC meeting 147.

Regards

Bi-Monthly Chief Executive's Report Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Meeting October 2020

OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Project 5111: Drift diving

Whakapapa River drift dive report and a brief description of our mitigation activities were submitted to Genesis Energy as per our agreement.

Project 5115: Population Surveys

Preparation for this summer's electrofishing survey has begun. The next zone to be electro-fished will be the Kaimai Range and Coromandel with the overall goal of creating a spawning habitat map to be used for RMA/planning purposes.

Project 5114: Shoveler

This annual count was done by F&G staff and volunteers. Murray Fisher, David Lawrie and Tony Habraken regularly help us in this region. There are also several very helpful landowners whose permission we obtain to cross their land each year to count large ponds and lagoons, also Watercare staff to get access to wastewater treatment ponds. Because of its' close proximity to our northern border, and our nearby counts on our side, we also count a large pond at Kaiwaka for Northland F&G. This year 2,440 shoveler were seen on Lake Waikare, up from 1,850 in 2019. These birds are a considerable distance offshore and without a powerful spotting scope (45x) most would probably go uncounted.

Project 5121 Harvest survey

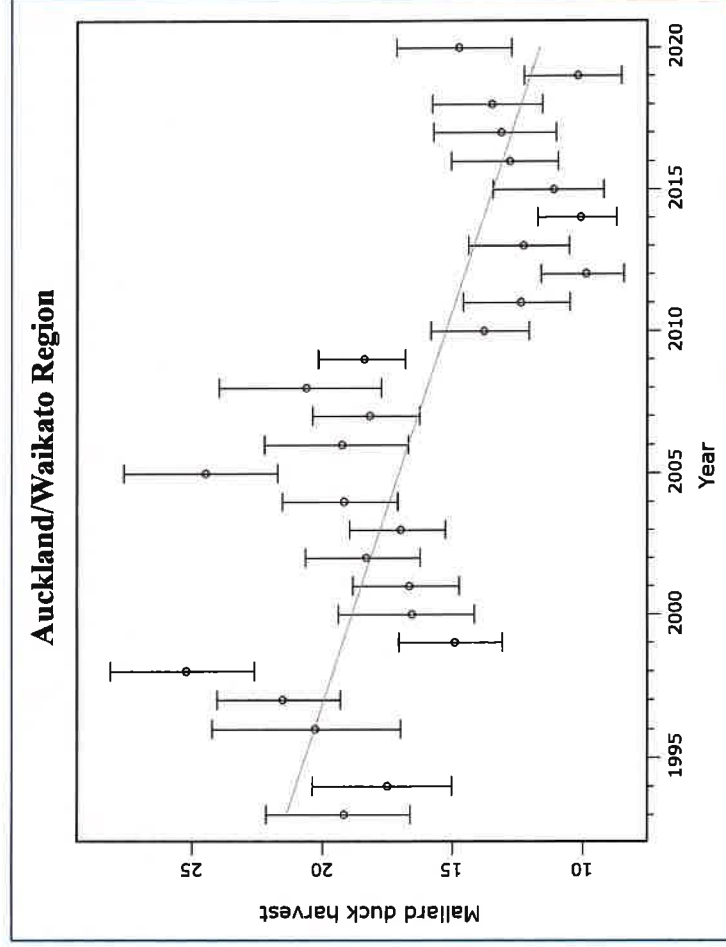
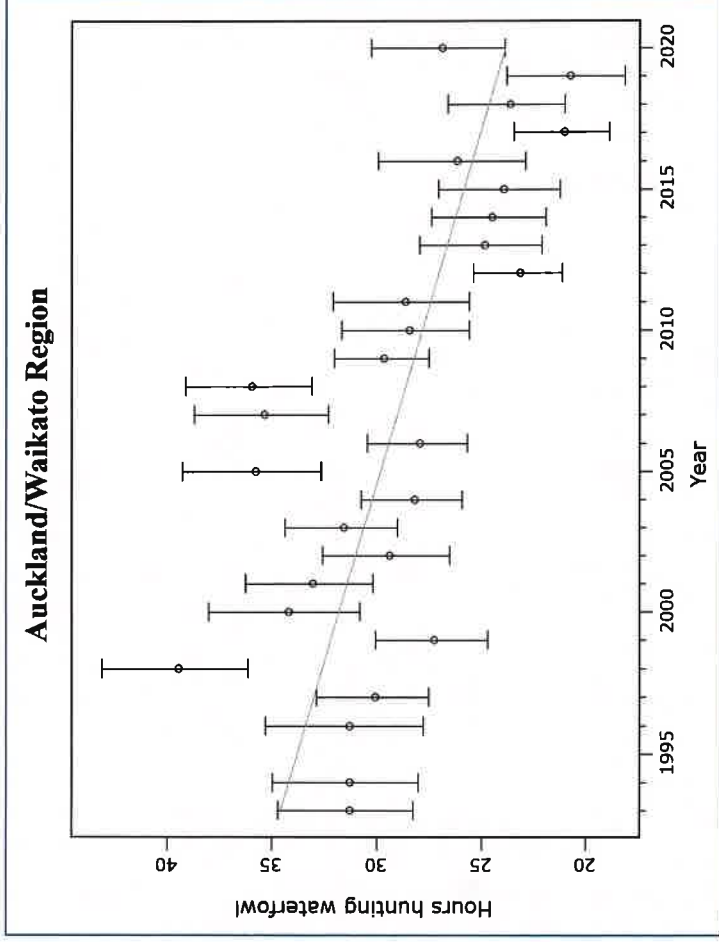
Two thousand fish were tagged to evaluate the effectiveness of the sterile fish release in Lake Arapuni. One thousand non sterilized and a one thousand sterile fish were tagged for the first of a three-year evaluation that will compare the two groups.

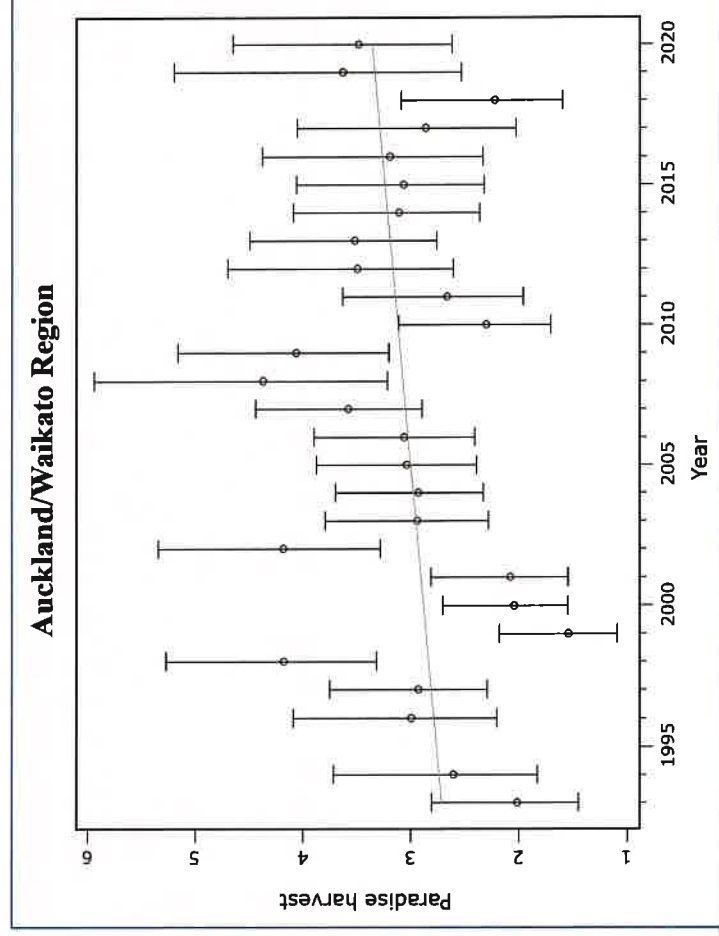
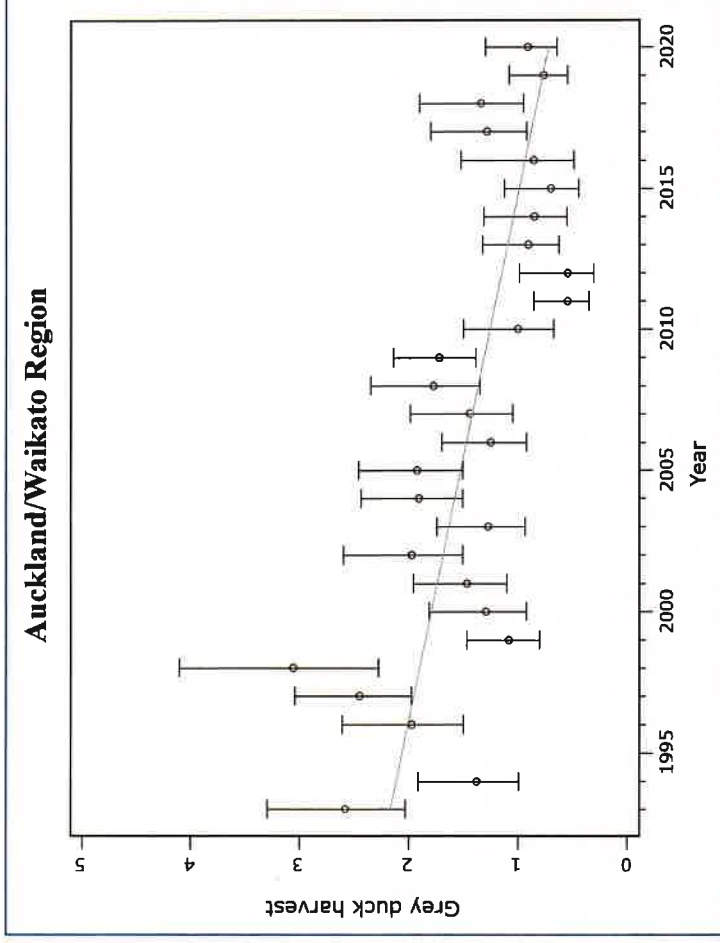
Project 5122: Game Harvest Survey

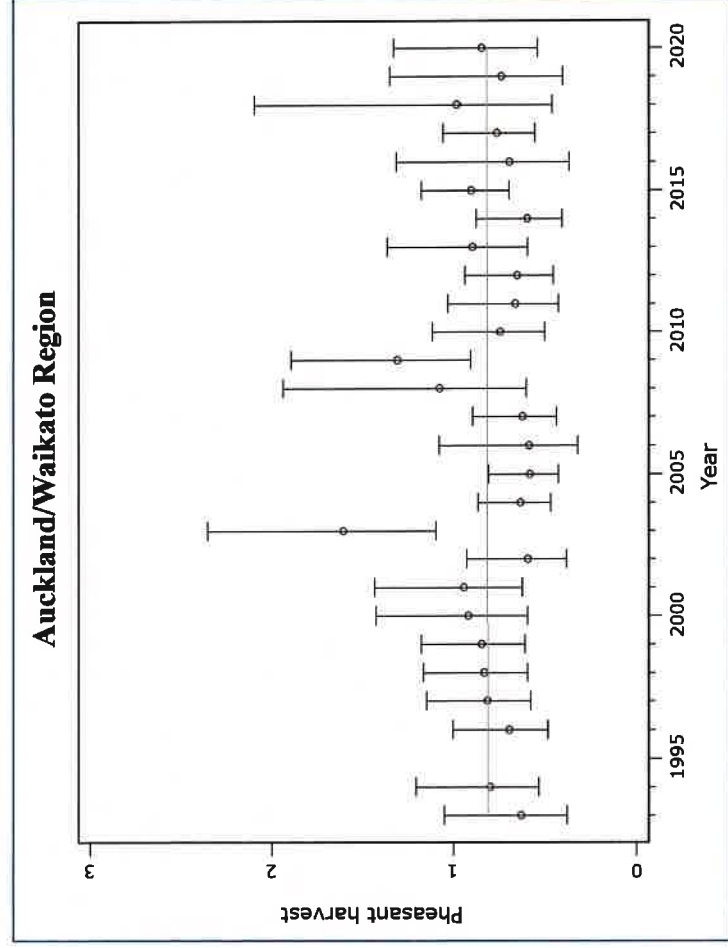
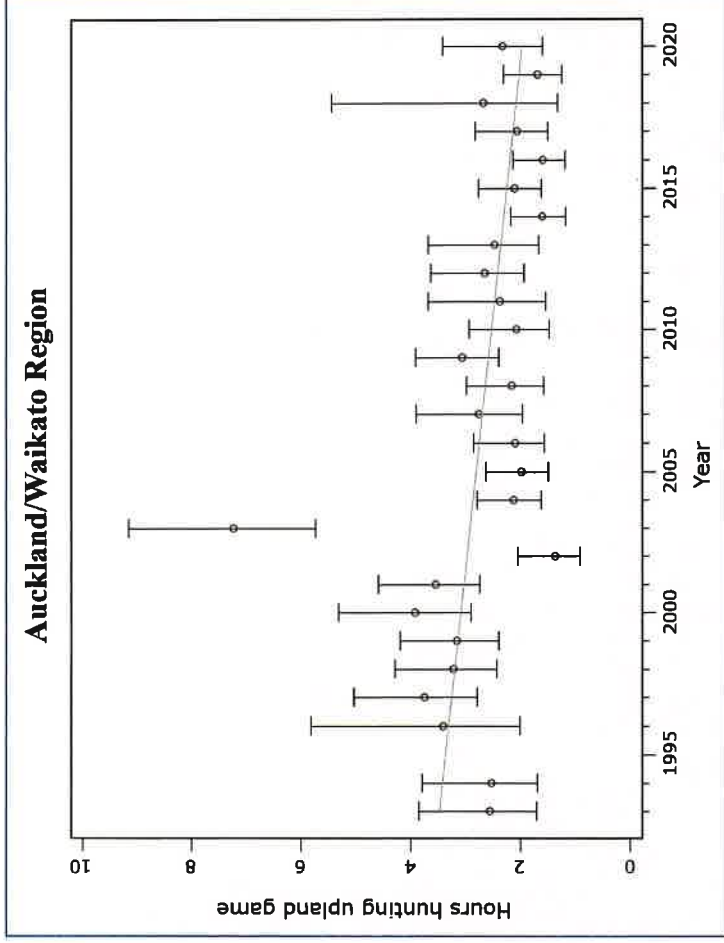
Harvest Survey:

The harvest survey data has been finalised for 2020. As previously indicated, average hours hunting waterfowl was the highest recorded since 2011, with a corresponding increase in harvest. This is likely due to a combination of the increase in season length and better conditions for hunting towards the end of the season with an increase in water levels which led to an improved success (high number of ducks per hour). There appears to be a tight coupling between number of hours hunting and number of mallard ducks shot, but less so for paradise shelduck harvest which has shown a general increase. Unfortunately, the GBHS does not differentiate between hunters who are targeting the different duck species so we cannot conclude whether the increase in paradise shelduck harvest is due to a greater availability of that species in traditional hunting areas or whether hunters in areas containing high numbers of paradise ducks and low numbers of mallards have switched their focus to specifically targeting paradise ducks. Mean pheasant harvest is continuing to

maintain a steady rate despite an overall reduction in effort over time indicating either an increase in hunter proficiency or a greater availability of birds for hunters to harvest. In summary, while the lower mean mallard harvest may in part be explained by more restrictive hunting regulations over the past decade and is showing some signs of increasing in the short term, the number of mallard ducks available for hunters should continue to be a key focus for council.







Band returns and reporting rate.

We are finalising the band return information with a few still trickling in. This year we focused our supplementary questions in the harvest surveys on band return information, substantially increasing our sample size in order to get a better estimate of reporting rate. David is completing the verification process and data analysis. He will provide updated population and harvest rate information at the next meeting.

Properties with Special Conditions (Pheasant Syndicates)

David conducted a property inspection of a property who's owners want to conduct a small scale pheasant release programme in conjunction with other environmental initiatives. An application has been received for this property to have Special Conditions in regards to upland game. The property to be known as "Thornwood Pheasants

The Leigh Barton (Cambridge) property has ceased operation.

Project 5161 Trout Releases

Fish releases were conducted in lakes Karapiro, Ototoa, Whatihua, Parkinson and Arapuni. The Lake Arapuni fish included the first release of sterile trout by Fish & Game. The brown trout released in Parkinson lake have already attracted some attention and feedback from anglers is good so far.

Table 2. 2020 Trout releases conducted 1+ are one year old and 2+ are two year old

Date	Tanker/pickup	Lake/River	1+ RBT	2+ RBT	2+Brown	Clip	Tag #
May	pick up	Moana-nui		525		None	
July	pick up	Ototoa	250	0	0	None	
May	pick up	Whatihua	200	0	0	None	
May	pick up	Parkinson	0	0	100	None	
July	pick up	Karapiro	250	0	0	None	
October	Tanker	Arapuni Sterile	1000	0	0	None	4001-5000
	Tanker	Arapuni Sterile	206			AD	
October	Tanker	Arapuni	1000	0	0	None	5001-6000
		Normal					

Consultation on Lake Pupuke stocking is ongoing, and we are still receiving emails on the topic. A staff report will be completed in the next month outlining the cost, angler use, consultation, and response from anglers.

Project 5162: Pheasant releases.

Staff have banded a small number of hand-raised pheasants for release on private land surrounding Lake Hotoananga by a group of hunters there who are also running a predator trapping programme when lockdowns allow. F&G has assisted with traps and lures for them c/o DOC.

A private application has been received by DOC to release 600 mallards and 300 pheasants on a property near Te Kauwhata. F&G staff were then questioned by DOC as to the merits of this application. However, it would seem to be entirely in order with a gamekeeper in

charge of the birds and also with predator control in place since 2006 – probably to the great benefit of other non-game wetland inhabitants such as endangered bitterns.

Project 5181: Control.

John Dyer has attended several meetings with Auckland Airport staff regarding their problems especially with Canada geese as well as black swans.

Pukeko control permits continue to be issued. One landowner has spent \$40,000 on revegetation near Matakana, which 30 pukeko are playing havoc with.

Project 5311 Access negotiation

Adam has written a letter warning an outfitter that was offering paid access to fishing on the Whanganui River. There was an attempt to set up another meeting with Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board in November, but DOC has been unable to find a suitable date at the moment.

OUTPUT 2: HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

Project 5211: RMA

Waikato District Plan

1 - Ohinewai Hearing:

David attended conferencing and gave expert evidence for the Ohinewai section of the plan which was focused on the new sleepyhead development. It was agreed during caucusing that the influx of cats and dogs that would occur through the residential and urban development would pose a risk to wildlife in adjacent high value wetland reserves. The applicant proposed a small-scale predator control operation which in or view was insufficient to mitigate the threats. In the absence of a large increase to the proposed predator control operation we suggested fencing to preclude dogs from roaming into the reserve and no cat convents on titles to prevent residents owning cats.

2 - Rural Hearing:

We have been preparing for the Rural Chapter hearing on the Waikato District Plan which is taking place via zoom on the 29th September. We submitted three pieces of evidence for the hearing – from David Klee specifically about earthworks in wetlands, from Ben Wilson about the importance of building maimai as a permitted activity, and earthworks in wetlands identified as Significant Natural Areas, and from Mischa Davis who addressed all the matters generally from a planning and legal perspective.

We had a successful outcome in the s42A Report from the Council which meant we only had two outstanding concerns to put to the Commissioners at the hearing. The s42A Report recommended to support our request to exempt maimai from the setback rule that requires landowners to obtain a resource consent for building within 32 meters of a lake or wetland or 28 meters of the Waikato or Waipa river. A wide range of structures are used as maimai,

many of which meet the definition of a building under the Building Act 2004 and were covered by this setback rule. Based on the outcome from the s42A Report that rule no longer applies to maimai. However the s42A Report did not consider our request to exempt maimai from the rule that requires a resource consent for any building in and Outstanding Natural Feature area, which many of our lakes and wetlands have been identified as including the Whangamarino. Ben prepared evidence on this matter which he will present at the hearing highlighting how shooting from a maimai at that distance is impractical and also unsafe.

Another success for us from the s42A Report was having wetland enhancement/restoration earthworks in the rural zone made a permitted activity – provided those works meet the criteria of a “conservation activity”. The definition provided in the plan is:

Means activities associated with indigenous habitat, wetlands and wildlife management and restoration that fundamentally benefit indigenous biodiversity or raise public awareness of indigenous biodiversity values. This includes stock exclusion, research and monitoring, the establishment, maintenance or upgrading of public walking or cycle tracks, interpretive and directional signs, accessory buildings including those for tourism, interpretation or education purposes and the provision of access for plant or animal pest management.

We are continuing to seek a new permitted activity rule for earthworks activities undertaken in Significant Natural Areas (SNA), as unless earthworks within an SNA are for the maintenance of fences, tracks, and drains, and further meet specific volume, height, and location restrictions, then a resource consent is required. The new rule that we are proposing essentially introduces an area limit for earthworks that are specific to enhancement/restoration work in wetlands and would require a “Wetland Restoration Plan” to be submitted to the Waikato Regional Council. This is a concern for us as most of our wetlands have been zoned as SNAs under the Proposed Plan.

Other successes from the s42A Report include having hunting made a permitted activity in the noise rules and having public information signs erected by Fish and Game made a permitted activity in the rules regarding signs.

Overall, we are pleased with the outcomes from the s42A Report which means we put together a well written submission in the beginning. Providing our two remaining outstanding concerns are to be resolved through the hearings process then we should not need to appeal to the Environment Court.

Healthy Rivers PC1

On the 8th of July we filed our appeal against the decision of the Waikato Regional Council on Proposed Plan Change 1 to the Waikato Regional Plan. Our appeal was prepared by our legal counsel Sarah Ongley with input from our staff and external expert planner Helen Marr.

We submitted a Legal Pool Fund application to the National Council and have had \$110,000 approved which will cover the financial year 2020/21 for the engagement of legal and technical expertise to complete the Environment Court process. We will not be able to

afford to continue with the appeal without this funding. The appeal process will be lengthy and include many days of attending mediation.

We have had several parties join our appeal via s274 of the Resource Management Act 1991 and we are also filing several s274 notices ourselves to join other appeals that address matters we are concerned in but did not appeal on ourselves.

We have so far presented a strong scientific, legal, and planning case, which has had partial success in the hearing processes. We believe that strategic alignment with DOC, where possible, will result in a robust case with moderate to high chances of success.

Cambridge WWTP

Late last year we filed a submission opposing the Waipa District Council's short-term consent application to renew the Cambridge Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) consents, based primarily on the adverse effects associated with the discharge of treated wastewater on the Waikato River and a lack of certainty of outcomes for the long-term solution.

The previous consent for the WWTP expired in 2016 (since operating under s124 RMA), the current application is seeking a term of 6 years, which will effectively allow them to continue operating, after being issued an abatement notice for significant non-compliance since 2018, until they undertake an upgrade of the site in order to meet compliance again. In our submission we raised concerns with the delay, consent conditions and poor performance of the plant. Ultimately the Council is seeking this short-term consent to buy themselves time for the long-term development of a south Waikato "sub-regional" wastewater treatment solution.

The Council have recently notified us of the hearing date which is take place next month. We have indicated to them that we would be willing to agree to the grant of the short-term consent providing several conditions are set as part of the consent application and that a Memorandum of Understanding is drawn up and agreed to between both them and us. We want to see a guarantee that a long-term option will be developed and implemented during the short-term consent which will lead to agreed improvements in discharge quality when compared to existing (pre-2020) levels. If these are not agreed to prehearing then we will be preparing evidence and presenting at the hearing in October opposing the consent application.

David and Adam attended expert conferencing to try and reach agreement with the applicants and WRC scientist on water quality matters. Subsequently, David has worked with the applicant and their consultants to develop an agreed set of conditions and an MOU that will ensure that reductions in contaminant loading will be achieved over appropriate timeframes.

Thames WWTP

Further statistical advice has been sought by the applicant to ensure that the sampling methodology being proposed will be enough to accurately determine discharge quality moving forward. This issue was raised by us due to large fluctuations in discharge quality

and apparent 'rogue' events which has meant standard treatment at times. Identifying causal mechanism for poor treatment periods also needs to be prioritised.

Meetings with Regional Council Regulatory Staff:

David has had several meetings with managers within the regulatory team of WRC to discuss the interpretation and application of the policy and rule framework of the Waikato Regional Plan. Of relevance is what can be conducted under permitted activity status in wetlands and ensuring a consistent interpretation of the rule framework. The new National Environmental Standards and initial thoughts on how these may impact activities and likely enforcement protocols were also discussed.

Meeting with DOC:

We met with the new director for the Taranaki/Waikato DOC area, Dan Heinrich, and his RMA Team Leader, Michelle Lewis. It was mainly a "met and greet"

Wallace Corp/Greenlea:

David attend a consultation meeting with Greenlea who have taken over part of the Wallace corp operation. They acknowledge that they will need to make some improvements. Greenlea are planning an upgrade in the near future and have just provided us with some preliminary designs. Under previous management the site had issues with non-compliance and lack of capital expenditure to address them. Greenlea have a good reputation and excellent compliance record with other plants they run so it is hoped that with a fresh start this site can finally get the necessary improvements.

Project 5221: Fish & Game land.

North Shepherd Wetland:

A check was made by John Dyer of Pond 2 on this wetland, which had become vacant when the prior incumbent moved to Cambridge. New pondholders marked this pond up but were contacted as it remained badly overgrown for several years. It has recently been brought up to a good standard.

Central Shepherd Wetland:

Another instance of a balloted pond that staff had concerns about, having recently been brought up to a good standard. Talking to the incumbents, the earlier problems seem to be behind them now.

Piggott Wetland:

The recent Botanical Society field trip in this wetland led to the discovery of a small plant there called watermeal, (*Wolffia australiana*). This dwarf duckweed is still a food item for humans in some parts of the world and is also fed to laying hens and quail. It metabolises pollutants such as nitrogen and phosphorus and is therefore used in wastewater treatment for this purpose. It is also an excellent food source for waterfowl, containing a large amount of starch, dietary minerals and trace elements such as calcium, magnesium and zinc as well as vitamin B12 While it is the smallest flowering plant in the world, (under 1mm long), it is also one of the fastest growing, doubling its numbers in under 4 days so that it can cover

whole ponds in just a few days. While prolific in the Piggott Wetland, it is also well-behaved and confines itself to the water areas under willow canopy.

McKenzie Wetland:

Pond 8 in this wetland had been abandoned but has since been re-balloted. A check onsite was made by John to ensure the new pondholders took up the challenge of getting this pond back into shape. The inspection and the feedback from them is so far all positive.

Aka Aka Wetland:

An audit and report for Council has been done of all 32 ponds in and immediately adjoining the Aka Aka wetland. There is nothing on file or in our archives to suggest any prior audit has been done. As a result of all the recent scrutiny by John, quite a number of ponds that have in the past been abandoned or nearly so, have since been brought up to a very good standard.

Williamson Wetland:

When the nearby farm was sold, a gate padlock leading to this wetland was cut off and replaced, locking hunters out. This has now been sorted.

Golden dodder, a new and potentially serious weed, has been found in this wetland. John has visited the site and it is scheduled for spray this summer when it reappears.

Project 5231: Other land.

David conducted 5 site visits with landowners wanting advice on wetland restoration and how to reduce their environmental impacts. He is assisting in the development of plans and funding applications.

GBHT: We are assisting a landowner to construct 2 wetlands and received \$6000 in funding to conduct the earthworks.

Project 5241 Assessment and monitoring

Adam is nearly competed with the Whanganui Water Quality Monitoring Project report although no data was received from Genesis Energy. Genesis energy will continue to study the discharge in 2020 including temperature, MCI and suspended solids and this data will be critical to decide a path forward. Staff have committed to monitoring standings when the diversion is shut down this work was planned for 2020 but was impacted by the covid shutdown.

OUTPUT 3: PARTICIPATION

Project: Access negotiation

Launch of the Auckland/Waikato Fishing Travel Guide discussed in other publications.

Project 5312: User Group Costs.

John Dyer, a committee member of EPCM, assisted them with the Covid situation around delayed filing of IS4A financial returns to the Companies Office. Normally EPCM would have had an AGM at their ANZAC Day shoot and their annual accounts would have been approved by members in April as their constitution requires. However, lockdown meant this was just not possible this year. Other F&G associations that are Incorporated Societies may be in a similar position and should contact Mr Dyer if in doubt as to what to do.

Project: Magazine/supplement

Project 5331: F&G Newspapers

Upland gamebird hunting seems to be a lot less patronised in this region than it was in the past. To help reverse this, four very experienced pheasant hunters were asked by John Dyer for their advice for newbies and some very useful information was flushed out – excuse the pun. This article now awaits publication in one of the F&G publications.

Adam has been participating in the national PR group to guide a more cohesive PR approach. The group has been providing feedback on new approaches to PR including park and cast locations and promotion, new branding, and targeted emails. Auckland/Waikato has produced three different introductory emails for newly lapsed, long term lapsed and current licence holders. This year’s “supplement” was delivered via email to save money on printing and postage this has also allowed us to add links to relevant online material and how-to information.

Project 5341: Other publications

Adam and Roslyn have just completed an Auckland/Waikato Fishing Travel Guide with 19 places to travel and fish within the region. The goal of the project is to increase domestic fishing tourism. The map of the sites corresponds to a brief description complete with other activities that are available that previous surveys have found to be important to our anglers.

OUTPUT 4: PUBLIC INTERFACE

Project 5431: Liaison Advocacy

RiverCare meeting-

David attended the latest RiverCare meeting. We were unsuccessful with the large \$1.8 million funding application to the PGF and have instead relodged a modified version to the FIF. The initial response has been more favourable with feedback indicating that we have made through to the second round.

Waipa Lakes Accord Meeting:

David attended the latest meeting. One key topic he raised was the potential for a joint project around Lake Ngarotoiti with willing community members. The lake lends itself to a substantive restoration effort including land acquisition and retirement, deepening, pest fish exclusion and predator control. A separate meeting is proposed to develop a plan.

Adam gave talks at the Hamilton Anglers and Te Awamutu Fish & Game Assn.

OUTPUT 5: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Project 5541: Ranging training

Eight poisoned ducks were recovered in an urban area by a stream in Glen Eden, Auckland, taken to a nearby vet by SPCA and euthanised. John recovered several of these from the vets' freezer and discovered they had been poisoned with Alphachloralose treated wheat. This product can be purchased by anyone without a licence or training. Misuse of it a national issue with Alphachloralose poisoned ducks and other birds turning up NZ-wide. In conjunction with Richie Cosgrove, our National Office communications advisor, John drew up a media release and did several media interviews as a result: TV3 Newshub & RNZ Checkpoint for instance. It is possible that ducks are being poisoned accidentally by pest control firms targeting sparrows. Publicity is one way to get the message out that mallard ducks are protected by law and there are potential legal consequences for such carelessness, (or deliberateness). There are also simple ways to avoid this by-catch.

In response to poaching reports in Owhango, Adam conducted ranging at Owhango, Stone Jug, Kakahi and Taumarunui. Three anglers were encountered and were all licenced.

5841 National liaison.

The reimposed Level-3 lockdown for the Auckland region, (Bombay to Wellsford), from midday 12th August meant that there was no gamebird hunting allowed. That's because the earlier restrictions from the first lockdown, before the usual May opening weekend, had been put back in place without amendment. It was now legal to shoot geese, possums, rabbits, targets, etc., within the new L-3 lockdown, just not gamebirds. These restrictions dating from before the May opening weekend were intended to stop 40,000 gamebird hunters travelling the length of NZ and socialising with friends and family. However, those same reimposed restrictions in August simply were not relevant when hunters would mostly be hunting alone or in small groups after pheasants, quail and pukeko.

John Dyer enlisted the help of his contacts within Federated Farmers and the Vegetable Growers Association for the Auckland area to support the F&G National Office to appeal to the Ministry for Health to rescind this order. That would allow, for instance, pukeko control by those landowners wanting to put in crops. The Fed's and the Vegetable Growers were both extremely helpful and an exemption was given by Dr Ashley Bloomfield allowing gamebird hunting in the region to continue after midnight August 22. However, that meant we lost another 10½ days gamebird hunting in August in addition to the 21 days lost in May. So that was, for instance, 1 month of hunting lost to those told to "use up all their sub-gauge lead ammo" before the ban next year. It was also the case that L-3 continued on until midnight Sunday 30 August, for the Auckland (Wellsford to Bombay), area, meaning that travel to the Waikato to hunt gamebirds was on hold up until midnight of the last day of the gamebird season.

Ben sent out an email to the 1800 licence holders in Auckland City about the removal of the hunting restrictions. The email was open by 58% of respondents and 8% used a link to

obtain further information. Several emails were received by hunters thanking us for this initiative.

Invasive species: Adam took part in two national invasive species partnership meetings, one in Wellington and a virtual meeting. It appears that MPI will be expanding their invasive species program and additional funding and focus for the program provided by the current government is starting to show value.

**B. Wilson,
Chief Executive**