CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 179th MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 5th DECEMBER 2019 AT 12.00PM

Present

Crs David Woolner, Barry Roderick, Lindsay Lyons, Laurance Tamati, Ngahi Bidois, and Alan Baird.

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson, Matt McDougall, Anthony van Dorp, Lynne Sands, John Meikle, Carmel Veitch, and Lloyd Gledhill (Eastern Fish & Game); Dave Conley (Department of Conservation).

1.0 WELCOME AND KARAKIA

1.1 Cr David Woolner (Deputy Chairman) opened the meeting at 12.10pm, and welcomed councillors, staff, and Dave Conley (Department of Conservation), and invited Cr Ngahi Bidois to perform a Karakia.

2.0 APOLOGIES

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Crs Murray Ferris, Geoff Thomas, Ken Coombes, Adam Rayner, and Debbie Oakley; Mark Sherburn, Matthew Osborne, Eben Herbert, and Nigel Simpson (Eastern Fish & Game).
- 2.2 Agreed (Ngahi Bidois/Alan Baird) that the apologies for the 179th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [19/12/2.2]

3.0 Public Excluded Session

- 3.1 Agreed (Barry Roderick/Lindsay Lyons) that pursuant to Section 48 (1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, the public be excluded at 12.15 pm from the meeting to consider the transfer of previously considered Public Excluded items to the Public part of the meeting. [19/12/3.1]
- 3.2 Agreed (Ngahi Bidois/Lindsay Lyons) that the public be re-admitted to the meeting at 12.20 pm. [19/12/3.2]
- 3.3 Cr David Woolner provided an explanation for the unscheduled Public Excluded Session which was required to bring the following three items to the Public forum which had been considered within the Public Excluded Session at the meeting held on 17 October 2019:
 - Manager's annual performance review satisfied with performance;
 - Council's self-appraisal review satisfied with performance;
 - Appointment of Debbie Oakley (Te Puke) to fill vacant position on Council.

4.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (17 OCTOBER 2019)

4.1 Agreed (Alan Baird/Barry Roderick) that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2019 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [19/12/4.1]

5.0 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY

5.1 No items were identified for inclusion in Council policy.

6.0 MATTERS ARISING

6.1 Cr Barry Roderick requested an update regarding the concerns raised about communications and media statements, and Lindsay Lyons suggestion that these concerns be relayed to the NZ Council. Andy Garrick advised that the Chairman had addressed a letter to the NZC (copy provided in PFI) but this had not been tabled at the council's meeting because it had not been received in time. Martin Taylor (CE) had however, responded directly to it in a letter to the Chairman though he did not specifically answer the three questions raised in it. His letter appeared to miss the points being made, accused Eastern Region of unwarranted criticism, and pointed out that the NZC is a separate statutory body with a responsibility to advocate at a national level and undertake initiatives such as this in its own right.

7.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

- Cr Alan Baird Whitebait
- Cr David Woolner Staff assessment form for Manager's appraisal
- Cr David Woolner End of year social event
- Cr Alan Baird Swan at Stump Bay
- Barry Roderick Ray Bushell stand, Kaituna reserve

8.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

8.1 No conflicts of interest were identified.

9.0 2018-2019 PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 9.1 The audited copy of the 2018-2019 Performance Report for the Eastern Fish & Game Region was tabled at the meeting. Andy Garrick advised that the agenda item provided a detailed summary of variances and asked if there were any questions, concerns or comments that Council might have or wish to make in relation to the report?
- 9.2 Council had received an all but complete draft of the Financial Statement at the October meeting and following no further questions the 2018-19 Performance Report was adopted.
- 9.3 Agreed (Laurance Tamati/Alan Baird) that Council adopts the Performance Report for the 2018-2019 year. [19/12/9.3]

10.0 Presentation on Fish and Game Financial Processes

- 10.1 Power Point presentation by Accountant, Carmel Veitch and Office Manager, Kate Thompson.
- 10.2 The presentation generated discussion around funding of Fish & Game, e.g. primarily based on licence sales with nothing received from Central Government; R3 initiatives, other potential sources of funding; and relationships with iwi.
- 10.3 The brief for the Strategic Financial Review was discussed as was the extent to which both revenue and budgets varied from one region to another. It was noted that the NZC and National Office which relied solely on income from regions had a substantially higher budget than any of the 12 regions, while some regions which generated insufficient income to be self-sustaining, operated budgets that were quite disproportionate to those of other regions.
- 10.4 The objectives and membership of the Remuneration Sub Committee were also discussed. Chair of the NZC Lindsay Lyons, advised the objectives of the working party, which had one regional staff person on it, were to ensure parity and transparency across the whole of Fish & Game, both staff and managers. In response to a question

- as to whether this included the Chief Executive of the NZC and his staff, Lindsay advised no it didn't, but there was no reason why it shouldn't.
- Or Barry Roderick questioned Carmel Veitch in her role as accountant for the NZC and National Office whether she was concerned about the size of Eastern Region's budget given the questions concerns periodically raised about staffing levels here? Carmel commented that this region operates a hatchery which supplies fish to not only the Eastern Region's lakes but various other regions throughout the North Island, and manages grounds and facilities such as the children's fish out pond which are open to the public. Operation of the hatchery and associated programmes for liberations and monitoring form a significant part of the operations here. The region also provides administrative and technical services and assistance to both the national office and other regions across a range of functions including compliance and law enforcement, licensing, species monitoring and research.
- Barry asked Dave Conley (Taupo Fisheries Manager) what was happening with Taupo licence sales in light of the recent and significant decline in fish licence sales this region had experienced. Dave advised that they typically have two surges in sales, the first at the start of the season in July when the rivers open, the second during the December/January period when lake fishing becomes more popular. He noted that this season had produced some unusual results to date, with August and October seeing a substantial decline on last season's sales, while July, September and November had been on a par with last season. He said the overall result was a decline of 8%, and initial analyses had indicated this to largely be within the short term/day categories which may have been associated with reduced tourist numbers.
- 10.7 Andy Garrick noted that the earlier discussion concerning the Strategic Financial Review had largely focussed on how the committee was set up, and he asked if Lindsay Lyons could provide an update on its progress? Lindsay advised that a report/update had not been received at the last meeting of the NZC. Carmel Veitch, having sat in on the first meeting of the committee, provided a brief overview of where the review had got to. She advised that the committee had come to the conclusion that in order to address financial strategy it needed to broaden the scope of the review to consider organisational structure to some extent, and to this end had circulated a questionnaire to all regional chairs and managers. The responses received back would be collated by the NZ Councillors sitting on the committee in the near future.
- 10.8 Cr David Woolner highlighted the value of the staff within this region as mentioned within the Chairman's report, and on behalf of the Council thanked the staff, and Carmel and Kate for their presentation.

11.0 GAME SEASON CONDITIONS

11.1 Council moved on to consider Game Season recommendations, the first of these being the restrictive season regulations in the Reporoa/Broadlands area for the 2020 Season. Matt McDougall advised that the mallard population in the area has always been low and depressed compared to other areas. A major contributing issue was lack of habitat within this area, due in part to the hydroelectric management regime associated with the Waikato River (mitigation for which the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust was established for). Matt noted aerial transect counts had shown the population to be consistently lower than elsewhere and current monitoring had indicated no real improvement. He wasn't confident that anything other than major changes to the population could be picked up through this monitoring but aside from that, wanted Council to be aware that to actually make a real difference he believed

- daily bag limits would need to be reduced to one mallard only. Cr Alan Baird commented it was his understanding that many hunters within the area were continuing to take eight birds a day regardless of the regulations, and queried whether a limit of 8 birds over the opening with a reduced bag limit for the remainder of the season would make a difference. Andy Garrick noted this had been debated the previous year and rejected on a number of counts.
- 11.2 Agreed (Barry Roderick/Ngahi Bidois) that the restrictive season regulations (four week, four mallard & grey duck daily limit) for the Reporoa/Broadlands area apply for the 2020 season but if pre-season monitoring next year does not indicate a population increase then the season regulations should be brought back into alignment with the rest of the region during the 2021 season. [19/12/11.2]
- 11.3 The special swan season was discussed with Matt McDougall informing Council that the dates proposed for this were based around the highest tide for the month. Cr Barry Roderick queried Cr Alan Baird's comments about Stump Bay on Lake Taupo where he had heard that swan numbers were up in the area. Dave Conley (Department of Conservation) had no reason to believe that current numbers were problematic and no alarm bells had been triggered for DOC. Matt understood that the population was larger just around the corner at Tokaanu, and that swan numbers in that area had been stable for several years. Cr Alan Baird asked if the limit had been increased for the area and Matt confirmed that it had been.
- 11.4 Agreed (Barry Roderick/Lindsay Lyons) that a special swan season be scheduled for the weekend of 27-28 February 2021 in Management Area A1. [19/12/11,4]
- 11.5 Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Alan Baird) that a special pukeko season be scheduled for the weekend of 27-28 February 2021 within the entire Eastern Region. [19/12/11.5]
- 11.6 Council discussed the need to update the definition of game bird management areas as there were inconsistencies between District Council boundaries and Eastern Fish & Game boundaries. Council supported the recommended definition but agreed with Matt McDougall that a more detailed review should be undertkane as the current maps were not particularly clear.
- 11.7 Agreed (David Woolner/Alan Baird) that the Definition of Areas in the Game Gazette Notice includes the statement in the introduction that "The coastal boundaries of management units A1, B1 and, B2 are defined in Infomap 242-2". [19/12/11.7]
- 11.8 Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Alan Baird) to retain the status quo in relation to the cutoff dates for upland game, swan (relaxed season) and pukeko seasons (i.e. the last full week in August). [19/12/11.8]
- 11.9 Agreed (Alan Baird/Lindsay Lyons) that Council will not have an open season for brown quail during the 2020 Game Bird Hunting Season. [19/12/11.9]
- 11.10 Cr Lindsay Lyons expressed concern that indiscriminate dumping of carcasses appeared to be becoming more prevalent. Anthony van Dorp noted that incorporating a special condition into the Second Schedule of Eastern Region's Game Bird Regulations making it an offence to wilfully dump game birds or their carcasses would give Fish & Game rangers greater ability to deal with these issues than is currently the case because of a technicality in the Litter Act that does not provide for Fish & Game rangers (as opposed to Conservation rangers) being Litter Control Officers. Matt McDougall raised doubt as to whether this was the case and Andy Garrick advised that he would clarify what the legislation provides for at Council's next meeting. In the meantime the current code of conduct in the regulations booklet highlights dumping of carcasses as unacceptable practice while the revised (but yet to be published) national code expresses this in stronger terms still. Andy suggested that regardless of whether

- we can take legal action against offenders we need to continue to promote the message that indiscriminate dumping or wanton killing of birds constitutes unacceptable behaviour.
- 11.11 Agreed (Barry Roderick/Lindsay Lyons) that unless it is shown that there are additional benefits over and above what can be accomplished under the Litter Act 1979 (assuming Fish & Game Officers are authorised to be Litter Control Officers under that Act), then there is nothing to be gained from incorporating a special condition into the Second Schedule of Eastern Region's Game Bird Regulations making it an offence to wilfully dump game birds or their carcasses, i.e. the status quo should remain. [19/12/11.11]
- 11.12 [Postscript: Further investigation confirms the Litter Act does not empower Fish & Game rangers to be Litter Control Officers, and this being so this resolution should probably be revisited].
- 11.13 John Meikle noted that in the proposed First Schedule for the 2020 Game Season on page 28 of the agenda, Condition 3 pertaining to magazine extensions will need to be amended to be in line with recent reforms to the Arms Legislation.

12.0 APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS AND OTHER POSITIONS 2020

- 12.1 Cr David Woolner suggested that the Appointment of Officers be deferred until next meeting due to the number of Councillors unable to be present at this meeting.
- 12.2 Agreed (David Woolner/Laurance Tamati) that the appointment of Officers to the positions of Chair, Deputy Chair, Executive/Manager's Performance and Remuneration Committee, and the New Zealand Council appointee be deferred until the February meeting where it was hoped more Councillors would be in attendance. [19/12/12.2]
- 12.3 Cr David Woolner informed Council that the current chairman, Cr Murray Ferris, wished to stand down from the position of Chair, and Cr Barry Roderick advised that he also wished to step down from his position on the Executive/Manager's Performance Remuneration Committee.
- 12.4 Council proceeded with confirming Matt McDougall's appointment as its representative on the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust.
- 12.5 Moved (Barry Roderick/Alan Baird) that Council confirms Matthew McDougall as its representative on the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust. [19/12/12.5]
- 12.6 Cr Ngahi Bidois expressed interest in establishing a sub-committee to investigate other sources of funding. The R3 programme and the employment of the National Business Development manager was briefly discussed, and Andy Garrick suggested the proposal be added to the February meeting agenda for further consideration.

13.0 Dates for Council Meetings in 2020

- 13.1 The proposed dates for Council meetings in 2020 were discussed with some changes identified due to conflicting timetables. The meeting time of 12pm to 3 pm was also considered and was acceptable to all present.
- 13.2 Agreed (Ngahi Bidois/Alan Baird) that the following schedule of meeting dates and locations be confirmed:

	Date	Venue/Time	Key Topics
1	11 February 2020	Rotorua, 12pm	Council PrioritiesInitiate biennial review of Anglers Notice
2	9 April 2020	Rotorua, 12pm	 OWP – first draft plus proposed bids for contestable funds Consider submissions on Anglers Notice
3	11 June 2020	Rotorua, 12pm	 Licence Fees OWP – second draft Finalise recommendations on Anglers Notice
4	13 August 2020	Rotorua, 12 pm	Finalise OWP
5	15 October 2020	Rotorua, 12pm	 Game Conditions – initial consideration Annual Performance Report - draft
6	3 December 2020	Rotorua, 12 pm	Game Conditions – finalise recommendations
AGM	3 December 2020	Rotorua, 3.30pm	Present Annual Performance Report

[19/12/13.2]

- 13.3 It is important to note that the February meeting will be held on a Tuesday but all other meetings will revert to Thursday as is generally the case.
- 14.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS
- 14.1 Tongariro-Taupo Conservation Board No report.
- 14.2 Bay of Plenty Conservation Board No report.
- 14.3 Department of Conservation

Dave Conley was interested in the recent fish licence sales trends experienced by this region as these were not too dissimilar with what was occurring in the Taupo fishery, which appeared to correlate with a softening in the tourism industry there. The size and condition of fish through traps was very strong, up on last season, but numbers had generally been down across the board. He said it could be related to natural variation in the fishery or we could be seeing an impact of regulatory changes. There was evidence that harvest had increased, and staff will be making a good effort to get more data on the lake fishery this summer.

- 14.4 Cr David Woolner felt that there were a higher than usual number of people fishing the rivers. Dave agreed saying that the fish in the Tongariro catchment were great, and this had resulted in huge pressure. While they had seen fewer licence sales this season there seemed to be more effort being made to get out and fish from those individuals who had purchased.
- 14.5 In response to a question from Cr Woolner, Dave advised that both Czech nymphing and two handed spey casting had really taken off.
- 14.6 Cr Lindsay Lyons queried what had happened with the \$1,000,000 prize promotion? Dave advised that this was to be part of a festival run by a private promoter, but it had not proceeded due to legislative constraints on what had originally been intended.
- 14.7 The New Zealand Fish and Game Council

Cr Lindsay Lyons provided an overview of the recent meeting of the Regional Chairs and NZ Council which he advised was an initiative of the Chief Executive, and added

that the CE had done an exceptional job of chairing the meeting. Lindsay commented on the presentation by Bruce Robertson with regard to regional audits and leadership, and the positive messages that could be taken out of these. He also spoke on the presentation by the Chair of the North Canterbury Council which he said was well received by some but not by others. He noted that the content of the Power Point presented was entirely the work of the presenter. Lindsay advised that outcomes from the Hawke's Bay audit were still to be determined.

A discussion followed on how Fish & Game engages with the dairying/agricultural industry and the messages the NZC is putting out and to whom. Lindsay noted that the NZC has instructed its CE to take the focus off farmers and redirect it to regional councils and regulators.

Concern was expressed that the NZC had at its most recent meeting resolved to leave the final draft of the Infringement Notice System Policy on the table until the CE provided further information on elements of it. Anthony van Dorp spoke to the issues that were raised at that meeting but were unable to be addressed by the staff present, and put these into perspective. Lindsay advised the matter would be discussed further at its next meeting in February 2020.

A frank discussion followed on the disharmony that was becoming increasingly apparent within the organisation, the behaviours of some individuals, and the effect this was having on staff morale. Lindsay was queried as to whether the CE's contract had been extended and advised that it had been, and it was now an open ended contract.

Lindsay thanked Eastern Region staff and councillors for the support they provided.

15.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

- 15.1 Cr Alan Baird queried the reasons for the large drop off in numbers of hunters who had applied for a balloted hunting stand this year. Matt McDougall confirmed that new applications were half the number we usually received, and it would be a real concern if this was also reflected in the number of game licences we sell in 2020. Andy Garrick noted there were a number of possible reasons for the decline in the applications for ballots but rather than speculate on what these were we wanted to find out why via the hunters themselves and would be looking at this in the New Year.
- 15.2 Cr Ngahi Bidois asked if staff were aware of any trends in the number of catfish present in lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti. Andy Garrick advised that the programme co-ordinator, William Anaru, had commented that the numbers of catfish that they were catching had been declining, but whether this was a result of a decrease in population size or simply the effects of variation in catchability due to seasonal conditions or some other factor is unknown. Anthony van Dorp advised that there was no real talk of numbers at the recent Lakes Water Quality meeting, rather the focus was more on biosecurity measures.
- 15.3 Agreed (Barry Roderick/Alan Baird) that Council receives the Health and Safety Report, and Management Report. [19/12/15.3]
- 15.4 Agreed (Barry Roderick/Alan Baird) that Council receives the Finance Report and approves payments for September and October 2019 totalling \$278,022.24. [19/12/15.4]

- 15.5 Agreed (Barry Roderick/Alan Baird) that Council approves the proposed budget figures for the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Financial Performance and Cash Flow for the 2019-2020 financial year. [19/12/15.5]
- 15.6 Kate Thompson provided a brief update on licence sales commenting that an improvement had been seen in Eastern Region's sales since the licence sales report had been prepared, and that it seemed other regions had also recovered a little ground.
- Ngahi Bidois asked where the responsibility for improving licence sales lies? Andy 15.7 Garrick advised that ultimately the buck stops with him, but all staff contribute in some way. The new national business development role and the implementation of the R3 programme have been established to address falling participation and consequently licence sales.

16.0 **GENERAL BUSINESS**

- 16.1 Cr Alan Baird's Stump Bay swan item had been covered earlier. Alan did however wish to raise management of whitebait and whether this should be regulated as trout and game birds are. He would be writing to the Minister and wondered whether this would be something others would do also. Cr David Woolner advised that while all would probably agree with his points, whitebait was not a mandated species for Fish & Game and therefore Fish & Game could not put its name to it.
- 16.2 Cr David Woolner informed staff that the manager's performance assessment document had been reformulated and this updated version would be used next year.
- 16.3 Cr David Woolner suggested that in lieu of the usual BBO following the AGM, staff and Councillors may wish to get together for a social gathering sometime within the next couple of months and that the timing for this would be confirmed in due course. Andy Garrick also advised Council that anyone interested in joining staff for January's duck banding programme were very welcome.
- 16.4 Cr Barry Roderick asked that his request to discuss the late Ray Bushell's hunting stand in the Kaituna reserve be included for discussion on the February Council meeting agenda.

17.0 **MEETING CLOSED**

17.1 The meeting closed at 3.02pm.

David Woolner

Deputy Chairman

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

- 2.0 APOLOGIES
- 2.2 Agreed (Ngahi Bidois/Alan Baird) that the apologies for the 179th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [19/12/2.2]
- 3.0 PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION
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