

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held at the
NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton,
on Saturday 12 October 2019 commencing at 11a.m.

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M. Young
Chairman

23/09/2019

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton,
on Saturday 17 August 2018 commencing at 11.00am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: M. Young

Councillors: G. Annan, G. Avery, D. Cocks, W. Howard, N. Juby, P. Shaw,
C. Sherrard, S. Smith, E. Williamson.

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

Visitors: P. Hardy (DoC), M. Leeson.

1. APOLOGIES

A. Kerr

It was moved;

that the apologies be accepted.

Annan/Cocks CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 15 JUNE 2019:

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of 15 June 2019 be accepted as a true and correct record.

Annan/Smith CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Councillor Annan passed on the congratulations of the Te Awamutu Fish & Game Association to the Chairman Murray Young on having the wetland at Evans Rd named after him. The Association considered the honour was well deserved given Mr Young's many years of service to the Council and conservation.

5. CORRESPONDENCE:

Letters were tables from:

- Lindsay Lyons, Chairman NZF&GC, inviting the Chairman to a one-day workshop in November 2019. The Chairman informed the meeting that Councillor Annan had agreed to attend on his behalf.

- Lindsay Lyons, Chairman, NZF&GC requesting feedback on the proposed dates to set licence fees in 2020 and beyond, which would require regional councils to have their June meeting in the middle two weeks of that month. Councillors agreed that having a meeting in early/mid June was already standard practice and that they had no objection to the NZF&GC's request.

Councillor Juby recommended that where practical all Council meetings should be scheduled at least two weeks after the NZF&GC meetings.

- Kurt Bayer, Senior Reporter NZ Herald, with a request made under the OIA regarding interaction between F&G and Federated Farmers since the November 2018 elections. Mr Wilson noted that all the requested emails had been forwarded to Mr Bayer.
- Benesia Smith, Executive Director MNZM, requesting information that would assist the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the attack of Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019.
- Phil Long, Barrister, regarding the Ward Ranch case against DoC & F&G.

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

Dr Daniel reported that the sterile trout project was progressing well but that the juvenile trout were not yet large enough for blood to be taken to confirm that the fish were triploid.

Mr Wilson updated on the proposed Waikato District Plan emphasising that the workload was much higher than he had expected due to the large number of applications by landowners seeking changes in zoning for rural land that were adjacent to waterbodies with high Fish & Game values.

Mr Wilson updated on the Healthy Rivers Plan Change 1. Fish & Game had given its last presentation to the Hearing, which was well received by the Commissioners who thanked our expert witnesses (Sarah Ongley, Helen Marr, & David Klee) for the high standard of their evidence.

Mr Klee reported on his recent attendance at a biodiversity strategy meeting in Cambridge, with the majority of attendees having a realistic view of the contribution made by valued introduced species such as trout.

Mr Wilson introduced his Financial Report noting that while there were some areas of under-expenditure, he expected to be on budget for the year.

It was moved;

that the Chief Executive's Report and Financial Statements be accepted.
Smith/Cocks CARRIED

The meeting rose for lunch at 12.30pm and resumed at 1.15pm.
A. Daniel left the meeting.

7. NATIONAL SUB COMMITTEES:

The meeting discussed the financial threats facing Fish & Game over the next 5 years, especially funding the new staff positions in the smaller regions.

Councillor Juby informed that the positions on the National Sub-Committees had already been confirmed by the NZF&GC.

The Chairman asked whether any Councillors were interested in being on any of the committees, but no such interest was expressed by any Councillor.

8. NZF&GC MEETING 7-8 JUNE 2019:

Councillor Juby spoke on the minutes, especially the initiative of the National Council to seek alternative forms of revenue.

Councillors agreed that a bequest policy would only be successful if potential donors could be assured that their bequests would only be spent in specified regions and/or nominated projects.

9. OSH REPORT:

Report tabled.

It was moved;

that the OSH Report be accepted.

Smith/Annan CARRIED

10. GENERAL BUSINESS:

The following staff reports were tabled:

- Monitoring Waikato Delta Baches on F&G Land – John Dyer
- Awakino River: 2019 Drift Dive Survey – Adam Daniel
- Mangatutu Stream: 2019 Drift Dive Survey – Adam Daniel
- Whakapapa River: 2019 Drift Dive Survey – Adam Daniel
- Upper Whanganui River Water Quality update – Adam Daniel
- Waihou and Waimakariri rivers: 2019 Drift Dive – Adam Daniel
- Aerial Transect Counts of Mallard and Grey Duck 2019 – David Klee

It was moved;

that the reports be accepted.

Smith/Annan CARRIED

Councillor Juby stated that he was unable to attend NZF&GC meetings for the rest of the year and offered his resignation as NZ Councillor.

The Chairman asked for nominations for the position of NZ Councillor. No nominations were offered.

After discussion it was moved;

that Councillor Juby's resignation as NZ Councillor be declined.

Annan/Smith CARRIED

Council acknowledged that Councillor Juby would be unable to attend NZF&GC meetings for the rest of the year.

Councillor Annan reported that he had recently attended a meeting of the Hamilton F&G Association whose members had enquired whether Council could provide some form of assistance to COLFO (Council of licenced firearms owners). It was agreed that this would be inappropriate given the Council's status as a Crown Entity.

There being no general business the meeting concluded at 2.06pm.



AGENDA ITEM 5

3 September 2019

Mr L. Lyons
Chairman NZF&G Council
Fish & Game New Zealand
PO Box 25-055
WELLINGTON 6146

Dear Lindsay

DATE TO SET LICENCE FEES IN 2020

Thank you for your letter of 12th June 2019 sharing preferences for confirming dates to set licence fees in 2020 and beyond.

The August meeting of the Auckland/Waikato Council discussed the NZ Council's recommendation that regional councils fix their June meeting in the middle two weeks of that month and have a response back to the NZ Council in the third week of June.

Auckland/Waikato Councillors considered it crucial that they had an opportunity to discuss licence fee proposals in a full council meeting rather than by an email ratification process. Councillors were also cognisant that it was Auckland/Waikato policy not to have council meetings in May.

Therefore, the Auckland/Waikato Council fully and enthusiastically supports the recommendation of the NZ Council that the regional meetings to discuss the licence fee are held in the middle two weeks of June.

I would like to congratulate the NZ Council in sorting this issue out at an early date, so that the debacles of past years are not repeated.

Yours sincerely

Murray Young
Chairman

05

Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, game birds and their habitats

Auckland/Waikato Region

156 Brymer Rd, RD 9, Hamilton 3289, New Zealand. Telephone (07) 849 1666 Facsimile (07) 849 1648
Email aucklandwaikato@fishandgame.org.nz www.fishandgame.org.nz



18 September 2019

Murray Young
Chairperson
Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council
156 Brymer Road, RD 9
HAMILTON 3289

**Strategic Financial Review Committee
New Zealand Council, Fish & Game**

Dear Murray

This is a quick update on the background and progress of the above committee.

A number of factors have led to setting up the committee:

1. Strategically, we continue to operate in an environment where our financial commitment to defending the environment can escalate and we need to understand what we can and cannot commit to. One only has to look at the lengthy Horizons Regional Council issue and Otago Mining Deemed Permits cases to realise that we have to pick our fights in the future. To do that we need to understand the capacity of our war chest.
2. A quick projection of the overall finances of Fish & Game clearly shows we are running down our reserves as we continue the current business model. Projecting forward, we will reach minimum reserves in the next five years.
3. While we have every confidence that the R3 Programme will drive up participation and revenue over the next three to five years, it would be imprudent to continue business as usual and rely entirely on R3 to cover growing shortfalls.
4. This year, the Minister has made it clear that she will not support continuing increases in license fees without significant justification from Fish & Game. In other words, a detailed financial plan into the future.
5. Similarly, the R3 research suggests we are rapidly approaching the point at which further price increases will result in reduced sales and further reductions in revenue.

Primarily, the committee was formed to model some scenarios to better understand our financial position in five years time. However, while this seems a simple task, it is actually quite complex because we can only answer the future financial position question if we have an integrated strategic plan which includes NZ Council with the Regions. We may also have to visit our financial allocation policies and look at how we strike our individual budgets. Finally, as an integral part of any strategic plan, we need to check we are getting best use of our resources across the organization.

Accordingly, the committee has requested quite a lot of information from Carmel Veitch (NZC Finance Manager) to start the analysis phase. We plan to have our first face to face meeting in early October once we have had time to digest the information Carmel is assembling. The committee would like to assure you that we will engage in a full consultation process before any firm recommendations are made to NZC and the twelve regional councils.

If any council has any questions or concerns at any stage of the process please raise them with any member of the committee. The committee comprises:

Paul Shortis (Wellington & NZC) paulshortis55@gmail.com

Dan Isbister (CSI & NZC) danisbister@hotmail.com

Ray Grubb (Otago) raygrubb@gmail.com

Richard O'Keefe (NC) richard.okeefe@ritchies.co.nz

We consider it essential we keep you in the loop as we progress and obtain your feedback at relevant points.

Regards

The Strategic Financial Review Committee

Ben Wilson

From: Robyn Lingard
Sent: Tuesday, 3 September 2019 8:52 AM
To: Ben Wilson
Subject: FW: merit award
Attachments: Peter Nolan senior.doc

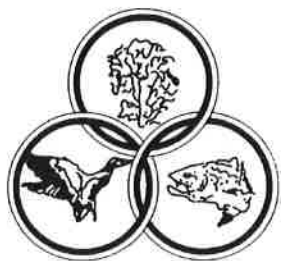
From: Eden Papakura Clevedon Maranda Fish and Game <epcm@hotmail.co.nz>
Sent: Monday, 2 September 2019 8:28 PM
To: Robyn Lingard <Rlingard@fishandgame.org.nz>
Subject: merit award

Hi Robyn

John Dyer has asked EPCM to support an application for a merit award for Peter Nolan senior
Attached is the letter of support

Regards
Bill Gordon
EPCM Secretary

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10



EPCM Fish & Game Association Incorporated

15 Weston Ave

Papatoetoe

Ph.: (09) 277-6169 Email: wjgordon@xtra.co.nz

Hi Robyn,

EPCM wish to support John Dyers nomination of Peter Nolan senior for a Fish and Game Merit award.

Peter has been a regular attendee at many EPCM events over a long period of time working bees, tree planting and distribution, sporting clay shoots.

A very active pheasant breeder for many years, he was a strong driving force behind the flax mere development and administration of.

A very dedicated upland game and wetland hunter. Who has put many hours of work into the preservation of the sport for the future.

Regards

Bill Gordon

EPCM Secretary

NEW ZEALAND GAME BIRD HABITAT TRUST BOARD

New Zealand Fish and Game Council Meeting August 2019

Prepared by: Robert Sowman, Policy & Planning Manager

The terms of appointment of the members of the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust Board expire on 31 March 2020. This requires some lead-in time action. The Minister of Conservation is expected to advise Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee of her appointments before confirming them. She will also need to be able to advise the appointees of their appointments no later than one month prior to the end of the current term of appointment. All of this is complicated by Parliament being in recess over the Christmas New Year period.

Therefore, confirmed nominations need to be presented to the Minister no later than Friday 13 December 2019.

Section 44F of the Wildlife Act 1953 makes provision for members of the Habitat Trust Board to be appointed by the Minister of Conservation consisting of:

- a) a chairperson:
- b) 3 persons appointed after consultation with the New Zealand Fish and Game Council:
- c) 1 person appointed after consultation with the Director-General:
- d) 1 person appointed after consultation with the Board of Ducks Unlimited New Zealand Incorporated.

Current members nominated by Fish & Game are Ian Hogarth, Steve Scragg and Mark Sutton. Other members of the Trust Board are Andy Tannock the Chairperson (proposed by NZ Council but appointed by the Minister of Conservation), John Cheyne (DU) and Susan King (DG).

All incumbent members are eligible for reappointment.

The process followed for previous Trust Board appointments is for NZ Council to consult Fish and Game Councils and invite nominations for the three positions. It then considers the feedback, makes its decision and advises the Minister of Conservation.

To satisfy this process, Councils should be invited (during remainder of August & October meetings) to provide feedback by 1st November 2019, allowing NZ Council to determine its nominations at its 22 – 23 November meeting and advise the Minister before 13 December.

Recommendations

That the NZ Council:

- 1. Note the Minister of Conservation consults with it on 3 people to be appointed to the Game Bird Habitat Trust Board and takes advice on a possible Chairperson.**
- 2. Agree that Fish and Game Councils be consulted on nominations for these 3 positions with feedback from them required by 1st November 2019.**
- 3. Agree to consider feedback and finalise recommended names at the November NZ Council meeting for submitting to the Minister of Conservation.**

OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Project 1122 Gamebird Population Surveys

Hunter Surveys: The hit and miss start to the season continued throughout. We had the lowest average number of hours hunted with a correspondingly low average and total harvest. Many hunting areas stayed dry through to the end of June and it appears that many licence holders simply didn't go out much due to the limited opportunities available at their traditional locations. The number of ducks shot per hunter per hour dropped from the preceding two seasons and was about average for the past decade (Figure 1). Despite the low overall harvest, we received a large proportion of band returns and preliminary results indicate a drop in our Grallard population. These results may be confounded this year due to banding site heterogeneity and the heavy reliance on the Hauraki plains catch. This area traditionally has a high harvest rate and the lack of birds caught and banded at the Auckland sites means harvest rates may be skewed artificially high. David is in the process of crunching the numbers and will present population data to accompany the remits at the December meeting.

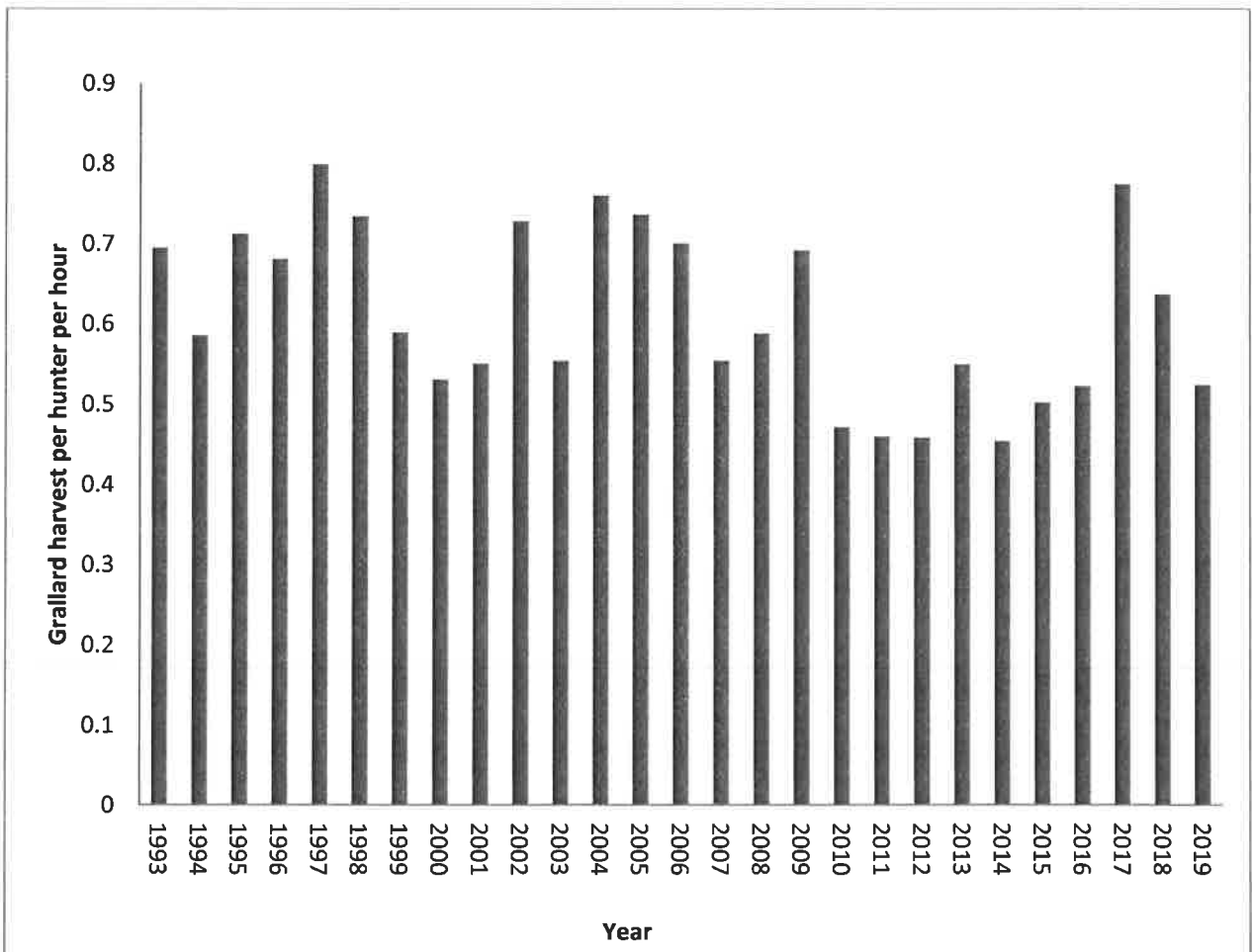


Figure 1: Grey and Mallard ducks shot per hunter per hour in the Auckland/Waikato Region.

Shoveler Survey: Every August, a one-day census of shoveler duck is carried out throughout the country. In our region, Lake Waikare had the largest number of shoveler with 1,850 counted. For comparison, 1,275 were counted in 2018, 1,600 in 2017 and 882 in 2016. The increase in numbers in Waikare this year underlines the ongoing importance of this lake as gamebird habitat and the need to address its serious water pollution issues. Shoveler assembled at this site, and at the many others we count, and then spread out to their breeding territories so the state of these various August staging sites has widespread implications for the species.

This year a new site, Lake Pokorua, a Wildlife Refuge near Waiuku, was checked by Tony Habraken and 10 shoveler males and 6 females found. Tony, often working with David Lawrie, has been doing regular shoveler checks around Tuakau and also certain shellbanks in the Manukau Harbour. Special mention should also be made of Murray Fisher who annually checks a number of shoveler hotspots for us in the Kupuatai Wetland. We are also indebted to the various landowners who allow us to cross their land to get access to these sites.

Project 1117 Gamebird Research

Game Research: Mallard duckling survival in response to brood habitat selection and use in Southland and Waikato. Project Manager: David Klee.

This paper is now complete and has been sent to the rest of research committee for any further comments. The full report is available for anyone that is interested in receiving a copy. Key findings are summarised below.

Habitat selection was strongest when drains, ponds, effluent ponds or sedge habitat constituted greater than 11%, 7%, 5%, or 13% of the brood buffer, respectively. Mallards that selected brood buffers with greater proportions of effluent ponds and streams experienced higher duckling survival, indicating adaptive selection. However, mallards also selected brood buffers with higher proportions of drains and ponds despite lower duckling survival associated with increased areas of these habitat types, suggesting these habitats may be ecological traps. Although we found no evidence of selection or avoidance of hedgerows, this habitat was associated with higher duckling survival, implying mallards may not always recognize beneficial habitats. Survival was also affected by water balance deficit such that daily duckling survival increased as soil moisture levels approached saturation.

Of the 2252 brood observations, 26% occurred in paddocks, 23% occurred in or near ponds, 18% occurred in streams, creeks or rivers, 17% occurred in drains, 7% occurred in effluent ponds and the remaining 9% occurred near roads or in fields. Duckling survival decreased when broods were closest to water and when there was taller vegetation within 5 m² of the brood observation, but was unaffected by habitat type, vegetation type, the percent of overhead cover or the percentage of emergent vegetation at the nearest waterbody.

In conclusion, we recommend that managers:

- i) Focus on increasing the area of sedge/rush habitat to attract birds to high quality wetlands (such as areas with lower predator numbers), while discouraging abundant*

planting of tall vegetation (i.e., some trees and shrubs might be okay, but too many seem to be detrimental).

- ii) Maintain hedgerows or promote planting of hedge species near important waterbodies.*
- iii) Educate landowners about the importance of effluent ponds and encourage them to maintain riparian margins and fences. If landowners have lined ponds, then managers should also encourage wildlife escape mechanisms.*
- iv) Maintain and enhance streams with dense ground cover vegetation (and hedge species).*
- v) Direct efforts to prevent the removal of sub-surface drainage, especially during peak brood-rearing and promote the creation of seasonal or ephemeral wetlands.*
- vi) Further investigate which characteristics of effluent ponds and streams promote duckling survival and whether these characteristics can be manipulated throughout other waterbodies to enhance duckling survival.*
- vii) Continue to direct efforts to enhance habitat characteristics that have been linked to improved duckling survival or abundance, as determined from this study and associated studies throughout NZ. This includes increasing riparian margins, improving the quality of existing ponds and wetlands, identifying and conserving or creating wetlands where pest-fish have not established and promoting the creation and preservation of ephemeral wetlands.*
- viii) Undertake initiatives to protect females during nesting and non-breeding seasons by protecting important nesting habitats or encouraging hunters to harvest fewer hens.*
- ix) Conduct additional research to better understand predator and invertebrate communities of various habitat types so additional actions can be taken to improve these areas.*

Goose and Swan Dietary Study: David assisted in obtaining some more samples for the universities study as part of an organised goose hunt at Kawhia.

Project 1162 Pheasant Releases:

Properties with Special Conditions: James Kellow, who has established an upland game property with special conditions on the South Manukau Heads, has advised that 72,000 native plants have been established over 35ha of previous grassland, (much of this on steep gully sides). Three hectares of wetlands have been restored and 8,500 pheasants and 202 red legged partridge released. An astonishing 82 feral cats have also been removed from this remote spot along with stoats and ferrets. His neighbours are enthusiastic about the project with discussions over making the entire area a pest-free zone.

Project 1121 Fish Releases:

Lake Moana-nui: We received a request from Mark Banister that the traditional May release of 300 1-year-old fish into Lake Moana-nui is replaced with 50, 2-year-old fish. Adam Daniel has consulted with local club members and suggest that we continue to release 1-year-old fish in May in addition to 50, 2-year-old fish just before their October kids fishing day that now attracts over 300 participants. In addition, we will study Mr Banisters concerns that the 1-year-old fish have low survival by marking next year's release.

Project 1121 Fish Harvest survey

Lake Arapuni: There was a flurry of tags returned from Lake Arapuni in August but well down on most years.

OUTPUT 2 HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT 1221 Council Land

North Shepherd Wetland: DOC recently discovered a new weed, Golden Dodder, (*Cuscuta campestris*), near the Raeo Arm outlet. This has since spread downstream to the true left bank of the Whangamarino River by the weir. It is certainly a weed to be nipped in the bud as it can cause intestinal and blood disorders in horses and cattle.

Central Shepherd Wetland: A vandal in a 4WD vehicle, (reports vary as to the description), has deliberately damaged the steel gate, F&G signage and the fence at the entrance to this wetland. They have also been destructive at a boat launch site next to the Waikato River beside SH1 and opposite Oram Rd. The pondholders at the Central Shepherd Wetland have since held a working bee to repaired much of the damage.

Waikato Delta Islands: The recent moratorium on building baches on the Waikato Delta means that we need to regularly check to make sure that people on our land are compliant. That is complicated by having multiple titles on a single island, some of which is our land and some not – and it all looks much the same! However, a pre-programmed GPS shows where the various boundaries are. A check mid-August by John Dyer did not indicate any recent work outside of regular maintenance.

While there John came across bach owner Ian Mooreland, who will be well known to Franklin Acclimatisation Society members. Ian was boasting he had caught 2 trout from his bach deck and had seen odd ones jumping nearby, though they tended to be slabs.

North Emmett Wetland: Riverbank instability was noted by contractor Neil Rankin while working in the South-Emmett Wetland and looking back across the Mangatawhiri River to the true-right bank adjoining the North Emmett Wetland. A Waikato Regional Council specialist in riparian management was subsequently invited to inspect it and she recommended Matsudana willow poles to arrest the bank erosion. 30 of these have since been obtained from WRC at no charge, complete with plastic possum guard sleeves. These willows do not spread and have been used further upstream on the Dean Wetland with good results. It would be possible in future to harvest material from these older Dean Wetland Matsudana willows to extend their use to other sites with similar bank erosion issues.

Cocks Wetland: This wetland has recently been subject to an audit by John Dyer, meaning that everything within it; maimais, culverts, buildings, sluices and so on have all been checked and listed for future refence. Issues that cropped up along the way were unsafe stairs to structures. One has since been repaired and a second, (an abandoned maimai), is due for demolition. A potentially dangerous fireplace is also due to be removed. Yellow flag has been noted and DOC have been trying to eliminate this. Several pond-holders have rat issues inside their baches and have been notified. Claim tags have been checked and compared to our office records. Fortunately, nearly all of the 25 ponds were in good order. The Central Shepherd has

also been audited and the Piggott Wetland audit is now well underway. All F&G properties are being inspected in this way, so we know exactly what is where.

5231 Other land:

GBHT Applications and report: David was successful with both funding applications for projects being conducted with private landowners. Another co-funding application was lodged to the Inghams mitigation fund to help supplement one of these projects that falls in the Waitoa catchment. A report was also produced for the trust showcasing 2 wetlands which had been built 5 years ago (photos below). Since 2014, David has managed 32 wetland projects that have received a total \$438,913 in external grant funding with a total project value of \$927,522.



Photo 1: Holmes restoration project

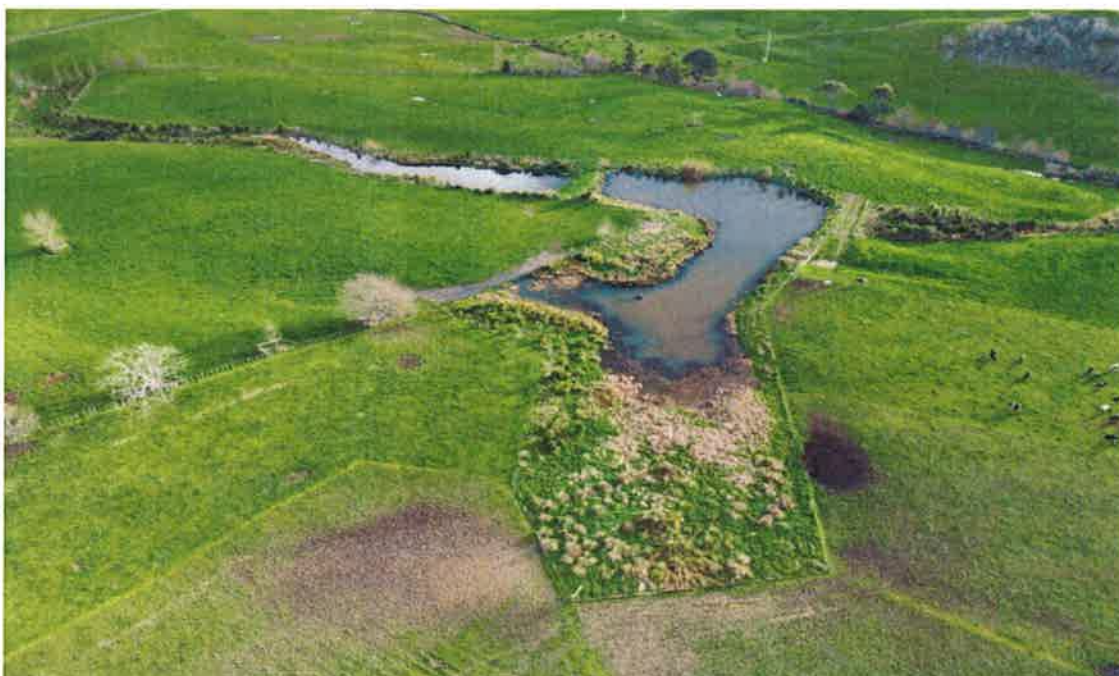


Photo 2: Glenim family farm wetland creation.

Landowner site visits: David conducted four landowner site visits to assess the suitability of project sites and discuss funding opportunities.

Project 1235 Trees

Tree Lucerne: The value of tree lucerne, (a.k.a. Tagasaste or *Chamaecytisus proliferus*), as a fast-growing nurse crop to other trees, a nitrogen fixer and a useful winter bee-nectar source as well, has been investigated by John Dyer. This plant will grow 2m in its first year. However, it seems it is not very happy with clay soil or wet feet, so its value may be limited to only those sites that suit it. Where new housing now bounds our wetland properties, fast growing screens may be needed and Matsudana willow poles might prove to be the most suitable.

Manuka: Manuka is now a popular tree to plant for its commercial value to beekeepers, but it may also have a role in controlling E-coli and nitrate runoff from farmland. A trial has been organised near Lake Waikare which F&G will be interested in.

Project 1211 R.M.A.

Freshwater Action Package: The Freshwater Action Package was released at the beginning of September by the Labour Government. The package includes a new draft National Policy Statement for Freshwater, draft stock exclusion regulations and Farming National Standards. This is a huge package and has potentially huge implications for freshwater management in New Zealand. There is also a tight consultation timeframe. Anna is working through the package and preparing notes and a submission which will focus around the implications of the proposal for wetlands and our work in wetlands.

National Biodiversity Statement: NZ has obligations under international conventions to protect its biodiversity. One element of this is the National Biodiversity Strategy, an overarching policy document which is reviewed every decade, and which progress is measured against. Anna prepared a submission on the discussion document, *Te Koiora te Koiora*. This is relevant has potential to impact how agencies at all levels of government allocate resource and prioritise actions relating to biodiversity management. The intent of submitting was to highlight the good work Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game already does so that this is supported into the future. The submission focussed on the wetlands works, protection and advocacy work we are engaged in.

Healthy Rivers Plan Change 1 update: We attended our third and final appearance at the Hearing for the Plan Change. Helen Marr and Sarah Ongley were presenting, and David Klee was in attendance and able to answer questions put by the commissioners relating to wetlands including the Whangamarino. We felt our contribution was received well.

The final stage is to produce written closing submissions. These will consolidate all points and respond to matters we haven't managed to close off at the hearings. Anna is preparing these and they will be filed in September.

Waikato District Plan: The Council has initiated the hearing process, with the first round of Hearings upcoming at the end of September. We have already received the Council Officers' reports for the first two hearing Blocks, which do cover several introductory and general matters we have raised. A number of our concerns in those hearing have been addressed in

the Officers' proposed amendments, and we are comfortable that there are no outstanding issues we need to advocate on in the upcoming two hearing Blocks. We are pleased to see that the officers have accepted some of our proposed amendments, while others which have been rejected can be addressed in more detail at a later hearing date.

The more relevant hearing blocks will run well into next year. Anna will prepare summaries of the key points for focus which is intended to assist with determining how we participate and resource the hearings. A key focus will be zoning around wetlands.

Kinleith Mill: Adam attended the Oji Fibre Solutions annual meeting where the company announced \$100 million investment in the wastewater plant that promises to remove all the colour from their discharge and halve the nutrient output.

Fonterra Te Rapa Plant: I noted in my last bimonthly report that we had withdrawn our objection to the discharge from the Te Rapa Dairy Factory after acknowledging that Fonterra had addressed our main concerns. However while we had intended to settle, the application may be going to hearing after all as other parties are not prepared to settle with the applicants.

Whangamarino Weir section 128 review: DOC have recently sent a letter to WRC proposing a way by which this review process could be settled. DOC have requested that the formal section 128 process be put on hold for the foreseeable future to allow for a comprehensive hydrological assessment to be conducted by independent experts on the entire system. If that suggestion is accepted, the next step will be to develop a terms of reference for the works in concert with WRC. Following that, DOC and Fish and Game would commission a full hydrological assessment of the Whangamarino Weir, with the scope to be developed collaboratively and agreed between RUD (Graham Levy – Beca), ICM, DOC and F&G. In broad terms, this assessment would seek to:

- better understand the wider dynamics of the existing hydrological environment including the operation of the Whangamarino Weir and the LWFCs; and
- identify any physical changes to the nature of the Whangamarino Weir that are considered to be desirable to reduce the extent of any adverse hydrological effects associated with its existence and/or operation while still achieving the ecological benefits of the weir.

1. If changes to the Whangamarino Weir are proposed as a result of the above, DOC and F&G will then seek to re-consent the Whangamarino Weir (earlier than the current expiry of the consent in 2027) and determine ways in which any works can be funded. This 're-consenting' would be publicly notified so that all interested, and potentially affected parties could be involved in the process.

2. DOC and F&G will provide an updated set of consent conditions for the weir consent to resolve the monitoring type issues that had been identified by RUD in the review initiation memorandum. The main purpose of the changes to the monitoring conditions will be to ensure that the right sort of information is being obtained that will assist WRC and the wider community when the resource consent comes up for renewal in 2027 (or sooner depending on the outcome of 1. above).

Open Country Dairy: David attended a pre-hearing meeting that was well attended to try and find some resolution to the outstanding issues regarding their discharge to the Waitoa River. It is difficult to reconcile what OCD is proposing with current directive to improve freshwater quality. Of particular concern are the loose standards being applied for in conditions of consent that would allow for large increases in contaminant loading in particular during summer low flow conditions.

Watercare Meeting: David met with new environmental staff at Watercare to discuss the roll out of avian botulism management plans for all sites under Watercare's stewardship. Currently these are largely located in the Auckland area. This follows on previous meetings David has had with upper management which highlighted the extent to the issue and how early detection and prevention would be preferable, not only for the species affected, but also the reputation of the company and cost savings from reduced clean-up operations. Watercare appear to be very receptive to adopting universal best practice plans for all their plants regardless whether or not they require re-consenting. This is fortunate, as many appear to have been re-consented in the Auckland area in recent times without any input from Fish and Game, and we have therefore missed the opportunity to insert conditions into the consent requiring avian management.

Project 1311 Assessment and Monitoring

OUTPUT 3 PARTICIPATION

Project 1311 Access Negotiation

Buchanan Road Access. A hunter contacted us during the 2019 dabbling duck season questioning why the gate on a paper road that historically facilitated vehicular access onto the stop bank had been locked since the building of the cycle trail. David had given preliminary feedback on the application and had been ensured by the Council that the creation of the cycleway would in no way impinge on recreational hunter's ability to use the area, including vehicle access. David had a phone conference with council representatives and WRC staff who access the site for flood control purposes and own one of the locks. The gates had been locked as the cycleway was receiving damage from vehicles especially during wet months. Some of this damage was apparently deliberate. The council were initially hesitant to continue to allow vehicle access, but we ended up agreeing that if hunters wanted a key, they could obtain one from Kenny Growden at WRC, Hauraki area.

Legally, a paper road cannot have any obstructions that prevent vehicle access onto them, although some councils have circumvented this requirement by passing by-laws precluding the use of vehicles on unformed paper roads. This is something we need to be mindful of in future plan changes.

Puniu River: The access issued on the Puniu River was finally resolved. It took the Walking Access Commission over a year to make a landowner remove a no trespassing sign from public property. Adam informed the Walking Access Commission of another sign on public land on the same day they closed the first job.

Project 1331 Magazine/Supplement

Fish newsletter: The fish newsletter is currently in preparation and will be sent out to licence holders by the end of this month.

OUTPUT 4: COMMUNITY ADVOCACY/LIASION

Project 1431 Liaison/Advocacy

Aviation Applicators Conference: Adam was invited to give a talk at the national Aviation Applicators Conference in Auckland. Adam focused on the risk of agrichemicals and the potential impacts of hill country farms on streams based on new findings that sediment is the major driver for poor stream health in Waikato streams.

Huntly Gun Club Meeting. David and Councillor Sherrard met with members of the Huntly Gun Club and friends of Lake Kimihia to discuss the ongoing management of the Murray Young Wetland post completion. Some of the members were concerned that balloting the wetland via random draw, would facilitate more hunters from out of the district, putting more pressure on the local game resource. Lake Kimihia is currently experiencing several management issues including a lack of water through degradation of the historical weir and bund around the lake edge. Members of the club felt it would be more appropriate to vest the management of the wetland in their hands and provide hunter opportunity to local licence holders, especially since some of their members already shot at the site with landowner permission during flood events. David explained that new wetland developments normally go through a ballot process although he welcomed the club to provide a remit for council to consider.

Biodiversity Strategy Meeting: David attended a regional biodiversity strategy meeting. WRC science staff presented data showing that Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) comprising forest and wetland ecosystems are continuing to be cleared and drained. Other keynote speakers included the likes of Bruce Clarkson. The information presented indicates that we are still losing biodiversity and whilst it is important to celebrate the successes and promoting those who are doing the right things, we are some way off arresting biodiversity loss let alone creating a trajectory of improvement. At our table there was a little bit of nativism, particularly regarding trout, but in general there appeared to be a large degree of acceptance that valued introduced species had a place.

Lake Ototoa: Adam gave a presentation at a Auckland City Council meeting on the potential to remove perch from Lake Ototoa. Adam recommended that fish removal is concentrated on Lake Tomarata due to the size and species present.

OUTPUT 5: LAW ENFORCEMENT

5511 Ranging/Training

NZ police issued offence notices to two individuals at the Blue Springs walkway that were allegedly fishing without a licence and in possession of drugs. We will be undertaking a prosecution of these individuals.

B. Wilson
Chief Executive.