



AGENDA

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

15 AUGUST 2020

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



**A Meeting of Council will be held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton
on Saturday 15 August 2020 commencing at 11 a.m.**

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* Denotes attachments

**G. Annan
Chairman**

28/07/20

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
on Saturday 16 May 2020 commencing at 9 am.

PRESENT:

Councillors: D. Cocks, P. Shaw, C. Sherrard, S. Smith, G. Annan, N. Juby, A. Kerr,
Staff: B. Wilson, J. Dyer, D. Klee, A. Daniel, M. Davis, R. Simmonds

1. APOLOGIES

E. Williamson, W. Howard, P. Hardy

It was moved;
that the apologies be accepted.

Annan/Smith - CARRIED

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Mr Wilson assumed the Chair and called for nominations for the position of Chairman.

Grant Annan was nominated by Councillor Sherrard, seconded by Councillor Juby.

Mr Wilson then asked if there were any further nominations. There being none he declared Grant Annan, Chairman and vacated the Chair.

The appointment of Councillor Annan as Chairman created a vacancy as Vice-Chairman. Council policy is that one vice-Chairman should be from the north and one from the south of the region.

Shane Smith was nominated by Councillor Juby, seconded by Councillor Kerr.

There being no other nominations Shane Smith assumed the position of Southern Vice-Chairman.

3. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None declared.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 21ST MARCH 2020:

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of 21ST March 2020 be accepted as a true and correct record.

Cocks/Colin - CARRIED

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Dr Daniel updated Councillors on the sterile trout programme. The sterile fish will be released into Lake Arapuni in October this year.

Councillor Smith inquired about the pheasant release at Mangatautari. My Dyer replied that local iwi had some general concerns that he had managed to successfully resolve.

An email was tabled from Robert Sowman seeking nominations, preferably women, for the Game Bird Habitat Trust. After discussion it was agreed that Council did not have any nominees.

An email was tabled from Paul Shortis, Chairman of NZ Fish & Game Council updating Councillors on the work of the Standing Finance Committee.

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

Dr Daniel noted that the drift dive proposed for the Waipa River at Toa Bridge had been postponed due to the Covid 19 shutdown. The Chairman emphasised the efforts of councillor John Atkinson who was successful in opening communications between the landowner and Fish & Game.

General discussion took place on the financial situation for Fish & Game both regionally and nationally. It was recognised that the financial risk to the Council could be broken down into three areas:

- i) Immediate financial situation for this year due to low game season sales.
- ii) The financial situation for the next 2-3 years due to a considerable reduction in overseas angler numbers and some decline in game licence sales.
- iii) Long term.

Mr Wilson agreed to report back to Council on the long-term financial position at the August meeting.

It was moved;

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

Shaw/Smith - CARRIED

7. Botulism or Banding Report:

Councillors discussed Mr Klee's report emphasising that the banding programme provided essential data for the management of the duck population as well as having high level of community involvement and excellent ongoing publicity. It was recognised by Councillors that the programme was relatively low cost due to the high level of voluntary input by the hunting community.

Councillors thanked Mr Klee for the high quality report.

It was moved;

that the banding programme be retained and re-evaluated in five years to determine whether aerial transits can provide the level of precision required to determine population change in our region.

Kerr/Smith - CARRIED

8. Canada Geese Policy Review:

The Chairman thanked Mr Klee for his report.

Councillors discussed the report and agreed that taking back Canada geese as a game bird would impose a huge financial burden on Council.

It was moved;

That Canada geese be returned to the First Schedule (wildlife declared to be game) only if sufficient external funding is provided to reduce and maintain numbers at manageable levels.

Sherrard/Shaw - CARRIED

9. OSH Update:

Mr Wilson introduced his report noting the ranging guidelines for various Covid 19 scenarios.

Councillor Juby enquired as to why there was not more ranging effort in conjunction with police. Councillor Kerr replied that recent joint patrols with police on opening weekend had not been successful as they were reluctant to patrol areas where firearms were being used. Mr Wilson agreed but noted that Mr Dyer would be ranging with two constables on opening weekend.

10. General Business

Councillor Shaw enquired whether the office was issuing DoC permits. Mrs Simmonds

replied that they were, but the permits had to be posted out.

Discussion took place on the tagging/mark-up regulations. Mr Wilson agreed that they weren't ideal but probably the best outcome from a very difficult situation, especially as there was no certainty as to the date of the season opening.

Councillor Cocks enquired about publicity effort in the final week before opening weekend and that licence holders should be reminded that Fish & game was entirely dependent on licence fees for income. Mr Wilson replied that he would arrange for an email to go out to previous licence holders before opening weekend

Councillor Juby asked whether the fishing season should be extended similar to what was being done by North Canterbury (who were opening up selected lakes and the lower reaches of large rivers to winter fishing, with these waters usually closing on 30th April). Mr Wilson replied that this option had been considered but rejected because waters in the Auckland/Waikato region would not be closing until 30th June and there was already ample waters open to winter fishing.

Councillor Cocks reminded Councillors that they needed to consider the recommendation of the Licencing Subcommittee in regard to the selection of a licence system provider and their negotiated contracts.

It was moved;

that Council approves the contract between Fish & Game and Eyede, and agrees that the Chairman can sign the contract on behalf of Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game.

Annan/Cocks – CARRIED

It was moved;

That the Licencing Committee be thanked for their considerable efforts in negotiating the contract.

Juby/Smith – CARRIED

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 10:32pm.

AGENDA ITEM 5

From: stevemillie6@gmail.com

Sent: 28 June 2020 11:51

To: mcyoung@outlook.co.nz

Subject: 2020 duck season and future recommendations

Hello Murray,

I thought I would contact you in the hope that you might consider my comments and recommendations based on the success of the 2020 duck season. I would appreciate you tabling my email at your next council meeting for discussion and consideration.

The reasons behind this email is to advise you of my success (and those of many other hunters that I'm in contact with) with the timing and duration of the current Auckland /Waikato duck shooting season.....it was forced on us by Covid 19 but the later start and one week longer period was a wholehearted success.

My comments are based on my 50 years of licence purchasing (yes, I'm an experienced old bloke of 65yrs) and I hunt actively for the duration of every shooting season, both ducks and upland game. I have just experienced one of my most successful and pleasurable seasons and am recommending that you seriously consider this timeframe for future seasons.

My reason are as follows:

- With climate change we are seeing drier summers and autumns and with it a lack of water in many duck hunting areas until June when more regular rainfall occurs. Many areas (including many F&G owned and administered areas) are lacking water and therefore hunting is limited and unproductive.
- Traditionally the first weekend in May is fine and clear as is most of May. June sees much more hunter friendly weather with wetlands holding water and often paddock hunting opportunities as well.
- In order to maintain and attract new hunters to our sport we need to ensure opportunities exists to bag a few birds and this is more likely in late May/early June than during May. Our sport is in decline and with falling hunter numbers comes the increasing risk of the green brigade hastening the total demise of our traditional sport.
- Birds pairing up and disruption to breeding: With years of hunting behind me and my own observations on my block of land (where I have created wetlands for breeding), of recent times I haven't seen ducks paired up for breeding or ducklings in June for many years. It seems as the drier the seasons get the later the breeding. Since I hunt upland game until the end of August on many properties that contain duck habitat, I am in a good position to observe ducks paired up, nesting and also ducklings. As of now (the last weekend of the duck season), I have yet to see the aerial manoeuvres of pre-mating ducks and certainly no nesting hens nor ducklings in any of the areas I shoot.
- Push the "go for green" motto and encourage the harvest of drakes where possible. We want to maintain hen populations for breeding so with this motto we will continue to ensure a healthy breeding population for the future.

I hope that you may consider my suggestions and I look forward to your reply.

Best regards,

Steve Dickson.



8 July 2020

Mr Paul Shortis
Chair, New Zealand Fish and Game Council

by email: paulshortis55@gmail.com

Dear Paul,

Cessation of publication of fishing regulations booklets

I am very concerned to have been informed that the New Zealand Fish and Game Council (NZC) has made decisions regarding the future publication of fishing regulations that crucially affect anglers in the Central South Island (CSI) region without, apparently, having consulted either anglers or Central South Island Fish and Game Council (CSIFGC).

If my information is correct (and please advise if it is not) NZC resolved in a “public excluded” session of its 145th meeting (which took place over 2, 4 and 18 June 2020) to commission the development of a smart phone application as a replacement for hard-copy “sports fishing regulations” booklets, and not to print those booklets for the fishing season commencing 1 October 2020.

CSIFGC is by no means opposed to the development of a fishing regulations app. We see potential benefits from that for anglers and for our organisation — provided affected parties are properly consulted and the roll-out is well managed. CSIFGC has a number of concerns with the actions that appear to have been taken so far.

First, it does not appear that anglers have been surveyed or otherwise consulted regarding their preferences.

Secondly, CSIFGC has not been consulted on this matter. Each regional council has responsibility for promoting compliance with the regulations and taking appropriate enforcement action in cases of non-compliance. Any change to the means by which anglers are informed of regulations must be discussed with regional councils and agreed in advance.

Thirdly, it is not clear that staff furnished NZC with sufficient information to support the decisions that I am told have been made. I have been provided with the two and a half-page paper “Regulations

Smart Phone App” but (so far as I am aware) that was not supported by a cost/benefit analysis; by consideration of implications for enforcement actions; or by reference to the well-established best-practices for organisations migrating information delivery from hard-copy to online media.

Fourthly, if this matter was addressed at NZC’s 145th meeting, then the minutes for that meeting do not appear to record this among the “the general subject[s]” to be considered while the public is excluded, and the reason for exclusion, as is required by s 48(3) of the *Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987*.

Finally, CSIFGC considers NZC has an important role to play in providing “co-ordination” (*Conservations Act 1987 s 26B*) of matters such as this one but we do not accept that NZC has the role or power unilaterally to make such changes.

CSIFGC remains very willing to cooperate with NZC in a programme for the development and phased roll-out of a regulatory app, in consultation with other Fish and Game regional councils and with anglers. We submit that NZC should rescind any resolution inconsistent with this approach and initiate discussions with the regional councils.

Best regards



Dr Andrew Simpson
Chair, Central South Island Fish and Game Council



7 July 2020

Chair, New Zealand Fish & Game Council
Via email

Re: Regulation Guide Booklets – 20/21 Fishing season

Dear Paul,

My CE has alerted me to the surprising revelation that the New Zealand Council agreed in its Public Excluded Meeting that Sportsfish Regulation Books are not proposed to be printed this year. This was communicated to him via an email yesterday and discussed at a managers meeting today. He explained that the NZC agreed to the development a regulations App for the new season in lieu of the usual distribution of printed books by mail or from agencies. Martin suggested managers take the matter up with chairs and contact you directly.

This is the first our Council has heard of the proposal and while it agrees that there should be a general trend towards electronic media for licencing and regulations distribution (which could result in cost savings), agreeing to a hard cut off of printed regulation books without consultation with regions was quite out of order.

We would have expected consultation on a significant change to service delivery for our licence holders and at the very least been provided with:

- A cost benefit analysis. Costs could simply be shifted to the regions for printing and distribution. And there will be an inevitable increase in regulations enquiries.
- Customer research on the need for an App and potential uptake
- Risk assessment including consideration given to potential compliance issues
- Commentary on how to deal with customers without electronic means to download regulations.
- An implementation plan to ensure the phase out of books is well understood, including by agents.

In my view, the national printing and distribution of licences and the regulations has been the most constructive area of coordinated activity on behalf of Regional Fish & Game Councils that the NZC is involved in. We are disappointed that this has been essentially picked apart without any communication with regions or their staff on the potential implications.

Otago Council requests that the licence books for the coming season are printed with urgency and made ready for distribution with licences as usual. Secondly, that a stepped plan for app development and book printing phase out is written and consulted back to the Regions as is the usual path for matters such as this.

Just to be clear, Otago has no issue with the development of alternative options to make savings or deliver greater benefits to licence holders. We just feel strongly that that the decision to stop regulation book printing was not a decision to be made right now, especially without consultation and not backed with a well researched proposal.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Monty Wright".

Monty Wright, Chair, Otago Fish & Game Council

**Bi-Monthly Chief Executive’s Report
Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Meeting August 2020**

OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Project: Drift diving

2020 Drift diving reports have been completed excluding the lower Whakapapa River as we are waiting on flow data from Genesis. The upper Whakapapa River couldn’t be surveyed due to the new landowner not allowing access (as discussed in *Project 1311 Access*).

Table 1: Drift dive counts for rainbow trout in five rivers in the Auckland/Waikato Region (legal sized fish per km). Data for the Whakapapa is for the new dive site in the lower river.

Year	Waihou		Waimakariri		Awakino		Whakapapa		Mangatutu	
	30-40 (cm)	40+ (cm)	30-40 (cm)	40+ (cm)	30-40 (cm)	40+ (cm)	30-40 (cm)	40+ (cm)	30-40 (cm)	40+ (cm)
2015	25	4	*	*	6	3			2	9
2016	36	2	26	11	29	14			*	*
2017	66	21	*	*	10	23			2	2
2018	18	5	27	4	26	30			6	2
2019	12	4	11	0	11	16			5	4
2020	38	12	23	0	7	0	11	30	7	7

*River conditions were not suitable for a drift dive survey

Project: Fish Surveys

Electrofishing surveys: Adam Daniel processed the special data collected during the summer spawning stream surveys during July. Updating the regions spawning streams is an ongoing project that will eventually lead to a new spawning stream layer used to give a higher level of protection to streams with spawning trout values. The project was initiated by gathering all know data on spawning streams from the Freshwater Fish Database and old reports. Potential spawning streams with no data were prioritised for exploration. During November and December (2019) 14 stream sites were surveyed on the west coast (Figure 1; black dots). The table below shows the results of the surveys (Table 2) with only a couple of additional spawning streams found. To cover the entire region, it will take several more summers of electrofishing. EDNA would be a more efficient method of detecting trout but will not specifically detect the juvenile trout needed to designate a spawning stream.

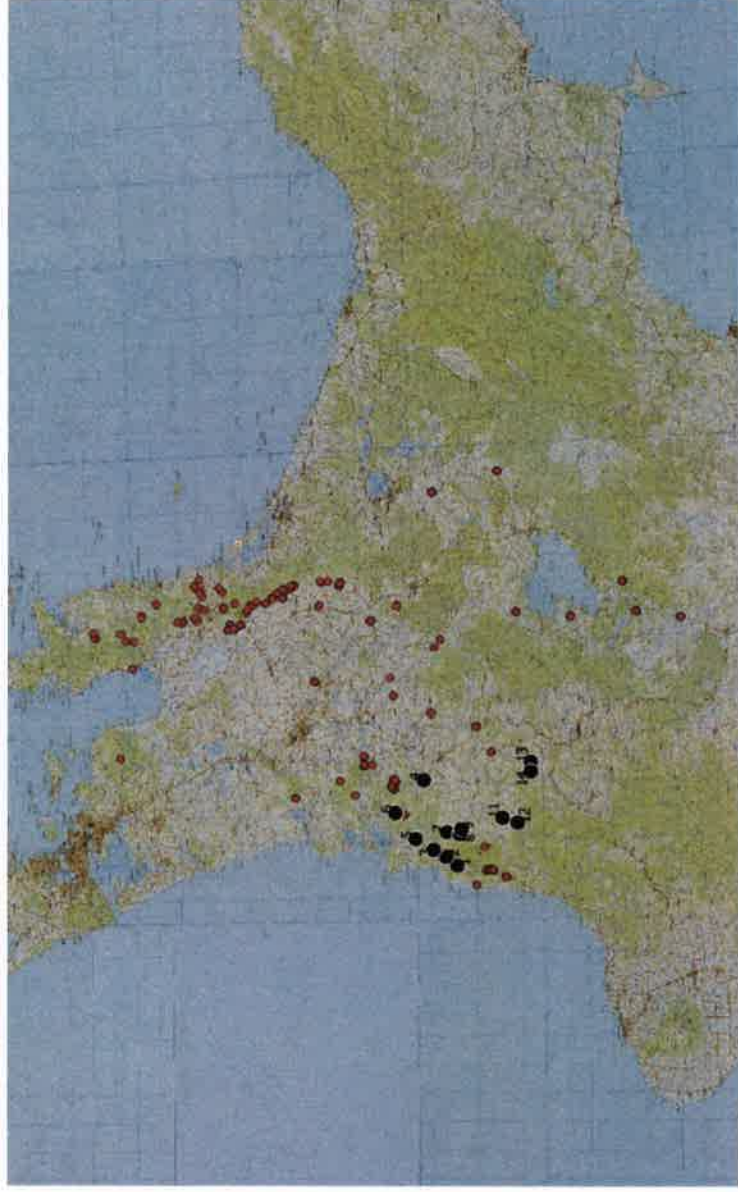


Figure 1. Pink dots indicate know spawning sites and the black dots indicate sites electrofished in 2020.

Table 2. Sites on the west coast electrofished in 2020.

Site	Stream	Date	Start x	Start Y	Juvenile trout
1	Rarimu Stream (tributary of Kiritohere Stream)	21 November 2019	174.729286	38.40200752	N
2	Mangakokopu stream	21 November 2019	174.765866	38.35712238	N
3	Kairimu Stream	15 November 2019	174.793791	-38.3078418	Y
4	Waitomo River	7 November 2019	175.077981	38.26773335	Y
5	Mangaohuinga Stream	15 November 2019	174.838105	38.23547409	N
6	Awaroa River	12 November 2019	174.944989	38.15462926	N
7	Pomarangai Stream	24 November 2019	174.865773	38.36014733	N
8	Mangaotaki River	26 November 2019	174.857015	38.41073128	N
9	Waitanguru Stream	26 November 2019	174.878771	38.41726684	Y
10	Mangaotaki River	26 November 2019	174.87806	38.41674019	Y
11	Whauhi Stream	29 November 2019	174.924653	38.58075442	Y
12	Mangamahoe Stream	29 November 2019	174.904744	38.64054124	N
13	Pangapapa Stream	11 December 2019	175.15135	38.69254374	N
14	Mangakahikatea Stream	11 December 2019	175.113611	38.69326428	N

Wild trout tagging program: This program is winding down with the retirement of John Atkinson. The program was revitalised by Nigel Juby over the last two summers in an effort to tag fish on the Whanganui River. Despite holding two major competitions in the tagging area only a handful of tags have been returned outside the 3 month stand down post tagging. Going forward there is a need to retag a couple of specific locations that have had significant water quality declines like the Puniu and Mangatutu Rivers.

Project: Fish Harvest survey

The 2019 drought dried up most of the regions drains reducing the nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment loads in most rivers. Staff anticipated significant increases in water quality and fish size.

The winning fish from the 2020 Lake Arapuni Fishing Contest was 1.2 kg larger than 2019 and the biggest fish to be caught since 2008. Staff have also received several photos of brown trout caught in Arapuni this summer that were 4.5+kg (10 pound). Yet again the annual Arapuni Fishing Contest, run by the Te Awamutu Fish & Game Association, has produced some valuable data.

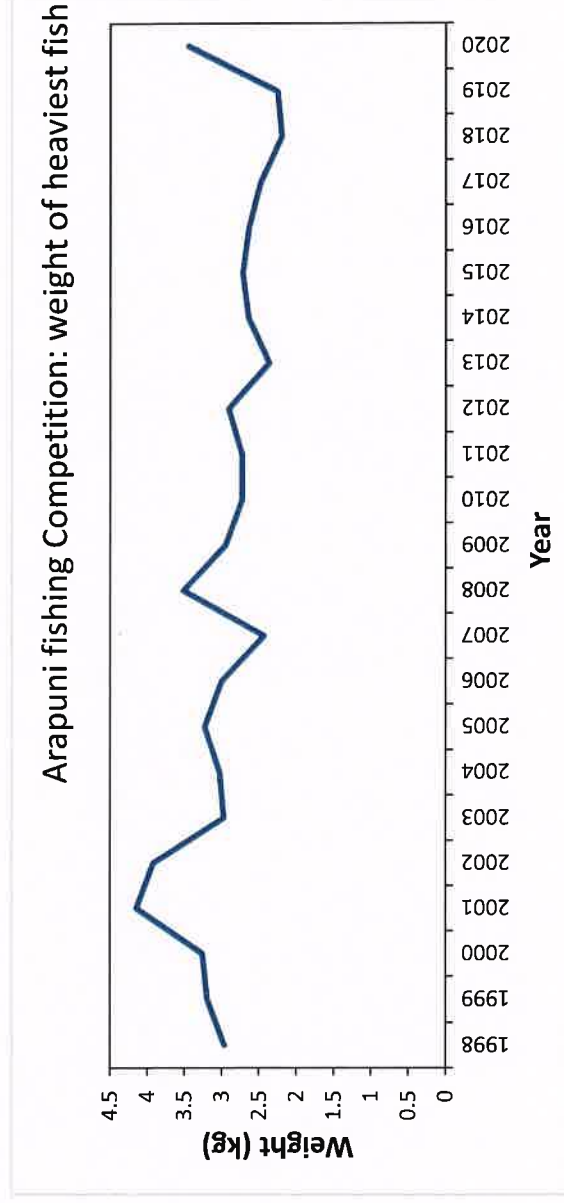


Figure 2. Weight of the heaviest fish caught in the annual Arapuni fishing contest 1989-2020.

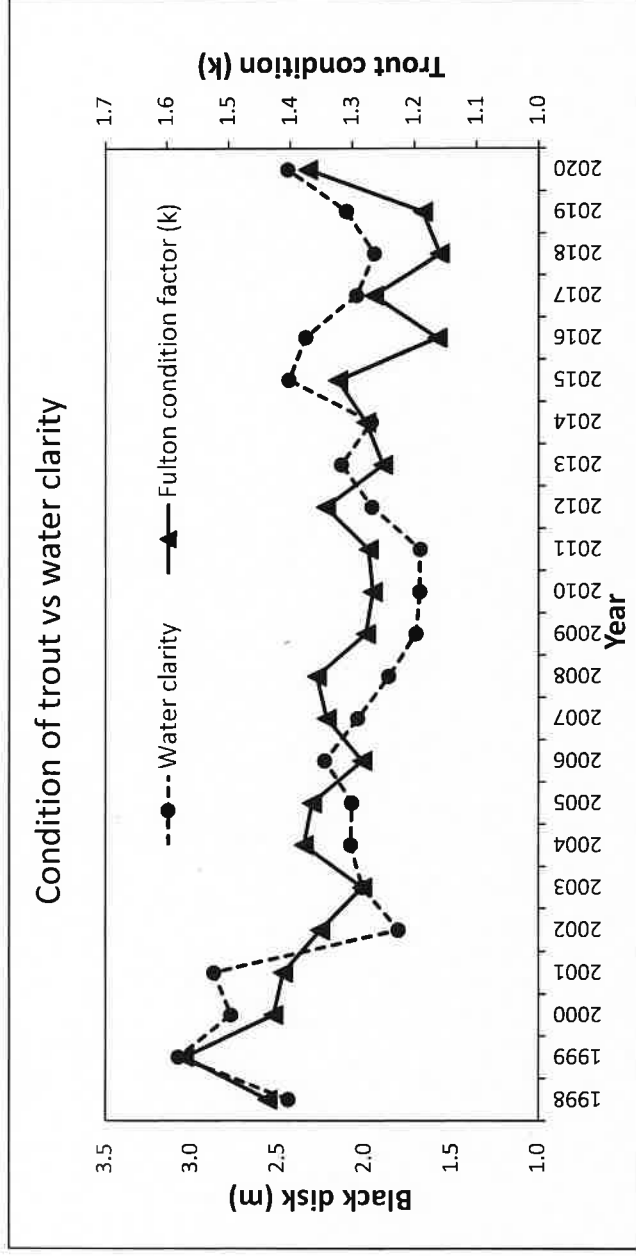


Figure 3. Water clarity and fish condition in Lake Arapuni 1998-2020.

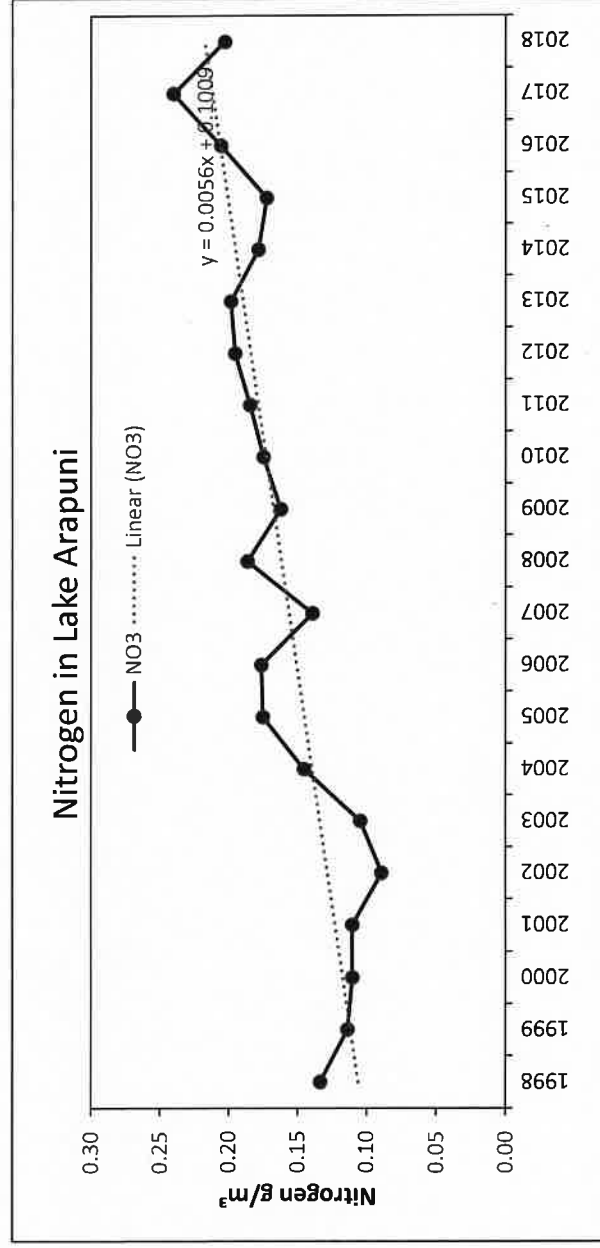
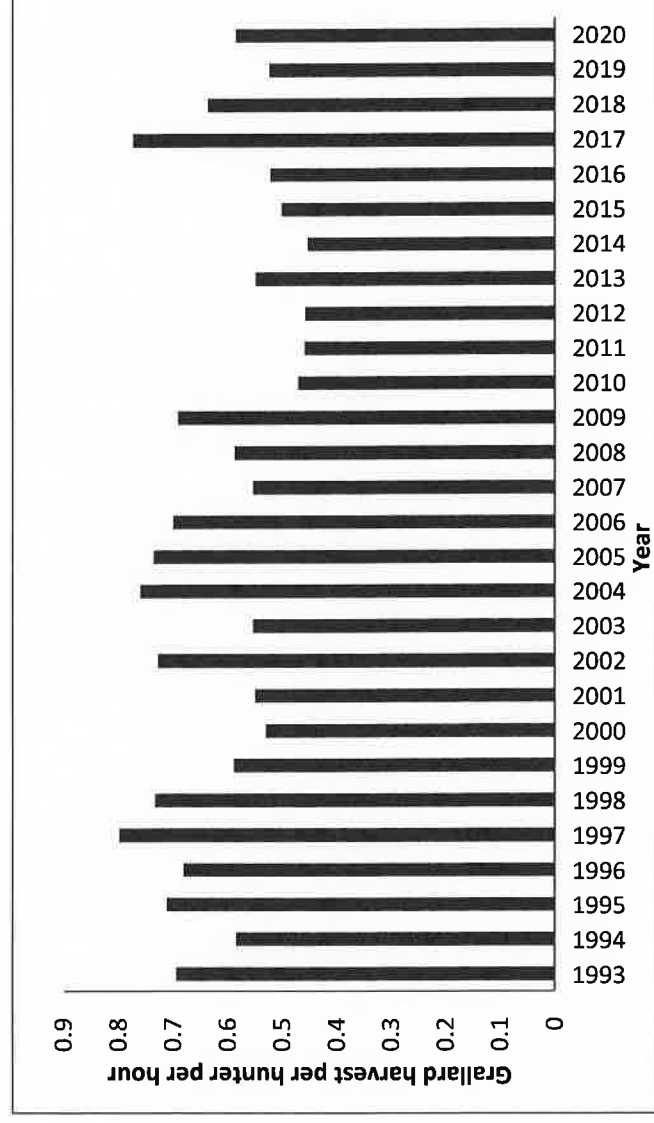


Figure 4. Nitrogen (NO3) in Lake Arapuni 1998-2020.

Project: Game Harvest Survey

Preliminary harvest survey data is available. This currently excludes out of district hunting as the GBHS is still active and total harvest stats are not available at the time of writing. The graph below should be treated as provisional but usually there are no substantive changes to average harvest once out of district hunting is included. The graph shows the average number of mallard and grey ducks harvested per hunter per hour. It is used as an indicator

of hunter success as it includes effort. Noticeably this year the average hours hunted is higher than any season in the past 8 years, since season length was initially reduced to 1 month. This increase may in part be due to the extra week extension to the season. In hindsight, the delay and extension to the season may have been beneficial for many hunters as several areas in particular large wetlands and swamps simply didn't have any good water before the last 7-10 days of the season. It appears that the hunters who got out in this last week made the most of it and in fact the average number of ducks shot per hour was better than on opening weekend. Overall, the season appears to have been above average compared to the last decade or so. We are still getting band returns coming in with 1 hunter reporting 27 last week! If you know anyone that is still sitting on bands, please ask them to give send in the info.



Project: Gamebird Control

Botulism: David is making good progress with WaterCare staff to develop Avian Management Plans for all their wastewater treatment plants and to have these in place and active prior to next summer. This now also includes all the Waikato District's plants as WaterCare have been contracted to manage these.

Permits to disturb/cull: We've issued 134 permits so far this financial year. Most are for Pukeko damaging riparian planting efforts, display gardens and expensive new turf etc. Often a permit is required because a licensed hunter with a shotgun would not be safe in the circumstances. However, we encourage people to use the hunting season whenever this is a viable option. We have recently rented out Zon-guns to farmers who had chicory to protect. This seemed rather late in the season. However, as one farmer explained, the

unusually warm conditions made this possible and these crops have also then been over-sown in clover.

OUTPUT 2: HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

Project: RMA

Waikato District Plan

Mischa has been preparing for the Rural Chapter hearing on the Waikato District Plan which is taking place via zoom on the 22nd September with evidence due on the 1st of September. We have scaled back our case after considering the council reports where we either had success in having our submission points accepted, or we considered that our submission point was adequately addressed by the report and not worth pursuing any further. Below is a summary of the key changes we are continuing to pursue which we will be addressing at the rural chapter hearing.

What we are still seeking however is an exemption for maimai for 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 are therefore covered by this setback rule. Ben will present at the hearing highlighting how shooting from a maimai at that distance is impractical and also unsafe.

We are seeking a new permitted activity rule for earthworks activities undertaken in Significant Natural Areas. This new rule essentially introduces a volume limit for earthworks that are specific to enhancement/restoration work in wetlands and would require a "Wetland Restoration Plan". As currently drafted, unless earthworks are for the maintenance of fences, tracks, and drains, and further meet specific volume, height and location restrictions, then a discretionary consent is required. This is a concern for us as the majority of AWWFG's wetlands have been zoned as Significant Natural Areas under the Proposed Plan.

We are also seeking that recreational hunting is considered as part of the reverse sensitivity policy to help avoid future conflict occurring when landuse changes occur near hunting sites. The most obvious example of reverse sensitivity conflict is noise from shotguns and complaints being made by residents from new housing developments near hunting sites. Another example is effects of increased cat and dog predation on gamebirds associated with new housing developments.

Healthy Rivers PC1 Appeals

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. The appeal is lengthy and detailed, but to summarise, our main points of appeal include:

- The values and uses for the Waikato and Waipa Rivers are not described. The identification of values is central to the identification of freshwater objectives and limits. Values should include amendments sought by Fish and Game to include appropriate recognition of wetlands, valued introduced species, fishing and spawning.
- PC1 fails to include other contaminants that need to be managed to achieve restoration and protection of the health and wellbeing of the Waikato and Waipā Rivers (in addition to nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment, and microbial pathogens).
- PC1 contains a lot of general, ambiguous, and permissive language. PC1 should be amended to reduce uncertainty and potential ambiguity. For example phases such as ‘timely implementation’, ‘general improvement’, ‘lowest practicable’, ‘significant reduction’ and ‘appropriate transition’ need to be either deleted or a clear interpretation of those phrases provided that is consistent with controlling farming to achieve water quality goals.
- With regards to wetlands – amending the PC1 policy wording to include stronger language to require restoration and protection of the significant values and use of wetlands, and to include reference to attributes for each type of wetland – then managing or restoring them so that they achieve those levels.

The appeal process will be lengthy and include many days of attending mediation. We have prepared a Legal Pool Fund application to be presented to the National Council for approval. We are seeking approximately \$150,000 (including contingency) over the financial year 2020/21 for the engagement of legal and technical expertise complete the Environment Court process. We will not be able to afford to continue with the appeal without this funding. However, the consequences of Fish and Game not appealing are significant. It would mean that Fish and Game fails to protect and advocate for fish and game resources on behalf of licenced anglers and hunters, as it is the only agency with the resourcing and expertise to critically appeal PC1. Not appealing also gives the impression to the Waikato Regional Council, and other parties, that we are happy with the plan as is. Of further concern is protecting our wins for the Whangamarino wetland, and for point source discharges – the latter of which is likely to be largely challenged by the District Councils of the Waikato region who are concerned about what the point source discharges rules mean for their waste water treatment plants. The consequence would be further degradation of an already degraded waterway, and loss of valuable fishing and hunting recreation opportunities.

Fish and Game has 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.

Open Country Dairy (Waharoa Factory discharge): Needless to say, the decision reached by the independent hearing panel was a great outcome for us and we hope that this is a line in the sand moment. In our experience it is very rare for commissioners to decline an application outright and vindicates the position we maintained throughout the process, which was long, convoluted and required significant effort. David and Ben presented evidence at the hearing which was quoted extensively throughout the decision with the commissioner agreeing with us on most of the issues raised. Integral to the outcome was the issue of cumulative effects and the fact that whilst effects from individual discharges

may be small that does not give applicants a licence to pollute. This has long been an issue and often referred to as 'death by a thousand cuts'. Had the applicants been slightly less arrogant in their approach and listened to the experts it is likely that we could have negotiated an outcome. At the time of writing there is no indication whether OCD will appeal the decision and no attempt has been made to contact us for any further discussion.

McPherson Quarry: We have lodged objections to the following consent applications for this quarry, which is located upstream of our Mangatawhiri wetlands:

- To discharge stormwater
- Earthworks and vegetation clearance in High Risk Erosion Area
- Discharge overburden to land
- Discharge cleanfill to land outside of High-Risk Erosion Areas
- Divert water in association with the operation of McPherson Quarry

Our concerns are:

- There is insufficient information to assess impacts upon the receiving waterways.
- The application does not contain any proffered consent conditions and how the effects of the operation will be adequately avoided, remedied or mitigated
- Many of the technical investigations required to determine the effects are currently lacking.
- Potential effects on game bird and trout habitat within the catchment and cumulative effects on downstream environments.
- The site contains ecologically significant freshwater habitat and vegetation that will be impacted by the proposal and the application fails to adequately avoid, remedy or mitigate those effects.
- Any increase in sediment due to the proposal would exacerbate sedimentation occurring in downstream Fish & Game wetlands during flood events.
- The reports indicate that there will be considerable movement and storage of soil and cleanfill near waterways. This activity has the potential to release significant quantities of contaminants into the environment, and there is insufficient information on how this risk will be avoided remedied or mitigated.
- The tributaries downstream are already overallocated in terms of N, P and suspended solids due to the impact of substantial existing stressors.
- The discharge occurs into the Waikato River Catchment which is contaminated beyond its assimilative capacity and this is recognised in the Vision and Strategy. Improvements to the Waikato River are required, and applications should reflect actual and meaningful reductions of contaminants.
- Any consent conditions should require improvements consistent with the requirements of the Vision and Strategy, operative NPS Freshwater Management RPS, NZCPS and PC1 and should ensure the life supporting capacity of water will be safeguarded consistent with Part 2 RMA.

Puke Coal Mine: We lodged an objection to their consent renewals back in February. After substantial discussions with the applicant we have suggested proposed consent conditions that the applicant appears to be happy with.

Fonterra Waitoa: We are expecting further information from Fonterra on the nature of their discharge to the Waikato River in regard to our concerns over Zinc, temperature and nutrients.

Fonterra Hautapu: After a site visit we requested further data from Fonterra, which we're currently evaluating to see if our concerns have been addressed in regard to their discharge consent to the Waikato River.

Thames WWTP: This process seems to have stalled; David has had several further zoom conference calls to discuss our concerns about increasing nutrient loads into the Firth. We have offered some potential solutions in order to give the applicants some more certainty that they can achieve nutrient discharge limits long term and have provided a revised botulism management plan for their consideration.

Te Kauwhata Wastewater Treatment Plant: David and Councillor Williamson attended a very frank and honest Zoom meeting to discuss the issues occurring with the plant. It is the first time that the Waikato District Council has publicly admitted that they had dropped the ball and they apologised for their failings when it came to both the consenting process and current plant performance. Subsequently local mana whenua have lodged legal action against the District Council due to the ongoing systemic failures that have led to 5 years of noncompliance with discharge limits from the plant. In our opinion these issues were predictable as the plant was never designed to process the load it is now required to deal with. David first raised these concerns in 2014 yet further developments were allowed to come online. The Regional Council also need to take some responsibility as despite years of significant noncompliance they have failed to take strong action and start the legal process which may have expedited the required upgrades. Unfortunately, there is little that can now be done to improve the current situation until the new plant is commissioned so the noncompliance is likely to continue for some years.

Subsequently, we received the new 3 water strategy which pleasingly shortlists several options that if implemented will create significant improvements to discharge quality for all WWTPs in the District. Jane and David also had an onsite meeting with Watercare and Iwi to discuss this document further. The preferred options will not be cheap and therefore we will need to submit on the LTP urging WDC to appropriately fund wastewater in the district after more than a decade of neglect that has led to almost all of WDCs plants being non complaint with discharge limits.

Waitomo Wastewater Treatment Plant: After further negotiations with Tourism Holdings Limited we agreed to the final wording for these consents. The consent will require a 7% reduction in contaminant release over the lifetime of the consent (7 years).

Kinleith discharge consent: We continue to receive reports on the upcoming renewal of the Kinleith Paper Mill discharge consents. As previously mentioned, Oji Fibre are planning a significant update of their wastewater treatment facilities and a much improved discharge.

Ohinewai development: As previously noted, we objected to the proposed rezoning of marginal farmland at Ohinewai to industrial and urban. One of the biggest issues is the treatment and disposal of wastewater, as both Huntly WWTP and Te Kauwhata WWTP are already non-compliant with their resource consents and are not suitable sites. The Mid-Waikato Strategy indicates that the most suitable site for the waste to go to will be a new WWTP planned to be built at Huntly by 2025. This seems like a suitable solution however there are significant concerns over the ability for WDC to fulfil this work within these timescales. Therefore, development of Ohinewai needs to be staged so that there is sufficient wastewater treatment capacity available for the houses at the site before connection is made.

David also attended expert conferencing in regards to ecological effects where experts reached agreement that cats and dogs pose a risk to some of the species that inhabit the Rotokawau reserve including nationally critical threatened bittern and that some form of management action to prevent potential effects is warranted.

Awakino Gorge highway: Adam reviewed and commented on the upgrade landscaping plans for the highway realignment, which will provide for an increase in angler access to the Awakino River.

- Puriri River and Apakura Stream Water Take Application

Project: Fish & Game land.

Golden Dodder: We met with DoC to discuss the presence of Golden dodder, (new noxious weed) that is present on some of our wetlands. Warning signs have been placed our Williamson Wetland entry gate. John investigate the 2 patches seen by DoC from a helicopter inspection of the Williamson Wetland. However, it seems this plant hibernates in winter and a reinspection later will be needed. It is also present by our North Shepherd Wetland weir.

Project: Other land.

Game Bird Habitat Trust: David has lodged a further application to the GBHT seeking \$8000 to help complete two wetland projects on the same property. The sites encompass a total of around 4Ha and have already been retired from grazing and partially planted. The projects plan to restore an old oxbow wetland and reinstate water levels to a historically drained ephemeral wetland which also encompasses a remnant kahikatea block.

Provincial Growth Fund Application: David is coordinating a large project involving Waikato RiverCare, Waikato Regional Council. The project seeks to conduct 18km of fencing to completely retire 130ha comprising 55Ha of high value wetland, 15Ha of wet marginal summer grazing land and another 60 Ha of steeper gullies and class XI land. After the areas

is fenced, 65Ha of grazing land will be planted and about 15Ha of wetland restored. We have just lodged a joint application to the provincial growth fund for 1.8 million dollars to complete the project.

Project: Assessment and Monitoring (water quality study)

Genesis Energy have not responded to requests for discharge data needed to complete the Whanganui Water Quality Monitoring Project. The final report will be on hold until the data is received or collected via field measurements. The findings of the study were backed up by data collected by Genesis Energy over the last six months indicating Lake O discharge contributes a significant amount of suspended solids and heat to the Whanganui River. Genesis energy will continue to study the discharge in 2020 including temperature, MCI and suspended solids. The covid shutdown prevented investigations planned to quantify the significant fish stranding that was observed during 2019. This work will be rescheduled for 2020.

OUTPUT 3: PARTICIPATION

Project: Access negotiation

Adam discussed some misleading signs and riverbed ownership on a property just upstream Stone Jug Road. This will require further follow up with printed maps showing the property boundary to prove to the lease holder that they do not own the river bed.

Adam met with the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board 15 June 2020 to discuss the Whakapapa Intake Road. The Trust board acknowledged that the Whakapapa Intake Road has a gross easement but are still refusing public access. DoC controls the easement and are required to undergo mediation with the trust prior to further action. Negotiations will be ongoing in 2020.

Project: Magazine/supplement

The 2020 preseason Magazine articles were completed in July. The travel article on fishing accommodation was informative and could be integrated into the camping guide done in 2018 to make a A/W fishing vacations or fishing travel guide.

Project: Other publications

Roslyn has been working on converting Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game pamphlets into Publisher documents. Once updated they will be added to the website where the public can either read them from there or have an option to print off the Publisher document in a pdf format. The “Access to the Action” booklet has been completed and can be viewed on the website for an example.

Both Barrelsazines produced each month over the game season to encourage hunters to buy a licence and get “out there, doing it”. Also, to remind them of the revised dates and other conditions, such as the sub-gauge changes for 2020/2021.

OUTPUT 4: PUBLIC INTERFACE

Project: Liaison Advocacy

Fonterra Tirau mitigation funding round: Adam met with Fonterra and Raukawa to select riparian fencing projects to be subsidised from mitigation funds provided by Fonterra as a condition of the Tirau dairy factory consents.

Project 5442 - Public Awareness

Adam has been actively involved in the national Check Clean Dry revamp but has passed the program on to the National Council as going forward there is a need for a behaviour change expert not an invasive species expert.

OUTPUT 5: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Project: Ranging training

We’ve arranged for 8 honorary rangers to attend a one-day refresher course at the Eastern Fish & Game Office in Ngongotaha on the 12th September 2020.

Project: Ranging

A decision was made to range on what would have been opening day (first Saturday in May), to make sure that no-one was kicking off early. A number of hunters did in fact go goose hunting or pigeon shooting to mark the occasion. However, the only duck hunting activity seen in quite an extensive search was several people preparing maimais.

On the opening weekend ranging effort was constrained to public land and open spaces.

One team in the northern area consisted of John Dyer and 2 police officers from the Maritime Unit who did firearms licence checks. This was at Fish & Game and DoC areas, principally around the Mangatawhiri and Whangamarino Wetlands, right around Lake Waikare and also the Waikato River Delta. There were at least 60 hunters’ vehicles at the last location checked at Hoods Landing, being a pretty good indication of a large turnout. Compliance was excellent. Everyone we met had a game licence, appropriate ammunition and plugged magazines. Guns were examined using nitrile gloves. Social separation was used throughout. Hunters were approached in wetlands and F&G business cards left under windscreen wipers for any of those missed. This occasioned a few phone calls to us afterwards, so word had got around.

Everyone seemed delighted to be out and about after lockdown, whether they had heavy game bags or not.



Photo 1: Hoods Landing, Waikato River, looking north.

A second team on the Hauraki Plains focused at major boat ramps which included the Friday afternoon as hunters were heading to their ponds and huts for the night to ensure that any last-minute licence purchase could be made in time. Given the public nature of the sites chosen and visible presence of rangers, unsurprisingly compliance was high. One group of hunters pulled into the boat ramp and patiently waited for another boat to be pulled out while rangers were in full view and talking to the previous party. Once they pulled their boat out it transpired that there were several unplugged gun and lead shot on the boat including spent cartridges. Why those hunters didn't just decide to carry on driving up the river we will never know but this was the only incidence of non-compliance detected and generally hunters had a great weekend. There was a lot of positive feedback with many hunters thanking F&G for ensuring they had a season.



Photo 2: Hoods Landing, Waikato River, looking we

There were some complex maimai disputes dealt with during the season. Not all hunters were aware that the regs concerning mark-up had been changed, and indeed some hunters were incredulous when informed that the changes were made because of the shutdown. But overall the change in mark-up regs was well received by hunters.

OUTPUT 9: ADMINISTRATION
Project 1912 Administration

AWFG Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plan: This project is on hold until we have some idea of the outcome of current external and internal reviews.

B. Wilson,
Chief Executive