



AGENDA

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

20 MARCH 2021

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held at the
NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton,
on Saturday 20 March 2021 commencing at 11a.m.

AGENDA

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G. Annan
Chairman

9/03/2021

AGENDA ITEM 3



AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton
on Saturday 20 February 2021 commencing at 11:30am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: G. Annan

Councillors: E. Williamson, C. Sherrard, D. Cocks, P. Shaw, A. Kerr, N. Juby, W. Howard.

Staff: B. Wilson, A. Daniel.

Visitors: P. Hardy (DOC).

1. APOLOGIES:

S. Smith, G. Avery, D. Klee, C. Robertson J. Dyer, M. Davis, N. Juby (for lateness).

It was moved;

that apologies be accepted.

Cocks/Sherrard - CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 12th DECEMBER 2020:

It was agreed that the motion regarding the Northern Special Shelduck Season should refer to 2022.

It was moved;

that the limit for the 2022 special season north of the Auckland Harbour bridge be increased to 15 per day.

Shaw/Sherrard - CARRIED

Mr Dyer proposed amendment was tabled. It was agreed that Mr Dyer's comments regarding the Aka Aka wetland had occurred later in the meeting and that no amendment was required to the minutes.

Councillor Cocks advised that a meeting of Aka Aka pond-holders should be called with the objective of getting them organised as a group/club. At a later date the pond-holders could consider whether they would become an incorporated society. A date should be

set for the pond-holders to meet outside of and preferably before the start of the game season.

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of 12th December 2020 be accepted as a true and correct record.

Cocks/Sherrard - CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The Chairman reported on his recent visit to the Lake Pupuke Quarry which he considered to be an ideal spot for releasing catchable size trout.

Councillors discussed potential sponsorship for the trout releases such as charitable grants.

It was moved;

that staff investigate the options for sponsorship of the Lake Pupuke trout releases.

Cocks/Williamson – CARRIED

Councillor Juby joined the meeting at 11.11am.

5. COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

A letter from Mr Gary Fraser, Chairman of the Blythen Wetland Society Incorporated was tabled. Mr Frasier reported on the successful predator programme carried out on the Blythen Wetland by members and enquired of Council whether the surrounding wetlands were undertaking similar predator control programmes. The members felt that while they were making good progress within their wetland it was only creating a void for predators to enter from neighbouring properties.

Councillor Cocks noted that Council had no control over those surrounding wetlands that were not owned by Council. A successful predator control programme was being carried out on Council's Dean Wetland. Mr Wilson reminded Councillors that Council had objected to the rezoning of the adjacent Singer Wetland to residential under the proposed Waikato District Plan. Councillor Cocks emphasised the value of this land in allowing for integrated management of the lower Mangatawhiri Wetland.

A letter was tabled from Mike O'Donnell, Secretary of the Upper Piako Wetland Management Association, observing that the last duck breeding season had been poor which had contributed to a low duck population. They recommended that the limits for the 2021 game season should be reduced to 6 ducks per day after the first week of the season.

Councillors discussed whether it was feasible to make changes to the game regulations this close to the season start. It was noted that the season had been delayed last year due to Covid, but that was exceptional circumstances. It would usually be extremely difficult to implement changes after January. Mr Wilson summarised the current regulation policy which was that Council set the regulations on a 3-year cycle with the exception that changes could be made subject to any material extraneous circumstances that might occur during that period. The draft regulations with recommendations were sent to the Minister of Conservation by the end of January, the regulation booklets were printed in February, and the regulations published by Gazette Notice soon after.

Councillors also agreed that the proposed change would have little impact on harvest based on Mr Klee's 2019 report on the impact of game regulations on harvest.

Councillor Sherrard conjectured whether the late season in 2020 had impacted on Mallard breeding.

It was agreed that staff should prepare a comprehensive report on the Mallard population and harvest regulations for the new council.

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

Councillors Sherrard, Annan and Shaw reported on the banding programme in their areas. It was noted that the total count would be below the annual target.

In reply to a question, Mr Wilson updated on the botulism outbreaks, stating that to date there was no evidence of a widespread outbreak but it was still early days. The Hauraki drought response group appeared to be working well with regular meetings and excellent coordination between agencies.

In reply to a question, Mr Wilson replied that he did not know the outcome of the recent Lake Waikare Section 128 Review Liaison Group meeting, but he would ask Mr Klee to update Councillors at the next meeting.

Financial Report

Mr Wilson reported on the recent burglaries at the office and the resulting damage to doors and a window. An insurance claim for some \$12,000 had been lodged. Security cameras had been installed. Councillors supported options including security lights and lockable poles/bollards. Mr Wilson noted that the current monitored alarm was loud and had scared the intruder away before anything was taken.

Mr Wilson stated that the budget for the current financial year was projected to be \$100,000 but due to stronger than expected fish licence sales the deficit was projected to be \$50,000.

It was moved;
that the Chief Executive's bi-monthly report and financial statement be accepted.
Cocks/Kerr - CARRIED

The meeting rose for lunch at 12.45pm and resumed at 1:20pm.

7. FISH & GAME – RESOURCE ALLOCATION PROJECT:

Councillors viewed the report as a PowerPoint presentation and considered Mr Wilson's written comments. Councillors expressed their concerns that:

- The report did not address the issues raised in the terms of reference.
- The analysis was based on total expenditure rather than core budgets.
- The report recommended that the financial needs of a region is the level of "activity" rather than licence sales. There were disadvantages with this approach, especially changing the incentive from licence sales to increasing activity.
- The concept of a flexible factor (10%) was impractical.
- The recommendations were unnecessarily complex.
- Anglers would be disadvantaged in the Auckland/Waikato Region due to the way that activity was measured.
- The recommendations would lead towards centralisation rather than co-operation between regions.

Councillors expressed their support for the peer review system of the national and regional budgets to be reinstated. It was also recommended that there should be a minimum budget set for the smaller regions.

It was also noted that the report did not address the R3 programme for increasing fish licence sales.

It was moved;
that the NZ Council is informed of Council's concerns with the Resource Allocation Report.
Sherrard/Williamson - CARRIED

8. GUIDING ON PUBLIC LAND:

Councillors Juby's report was tabled and discussed by Councillors.

It was moved;
That Ms Davis be asked to comment on the questions raised in the Juby report.
Juby/Cocks - CARRIED

9. GAME BIRD GUIDES:

The letter from Rainsford Grubb, NZC chair, on retention of the latent provisions for game bird guide's licencing was tabled.

It was moved;

That Council supports the removal of the latent provisions for game bird licencing.

Williamson/Cocks – CARRIED

10. NZ COUNCIL MEETING OF 16TH – 17TH FEBRUARY 2021:

Councillor Juby summarised the main points from the recent NZC meeting. He indicated that the report from the external ministerial review was unlikely to be available until mid-April. Until the review was available decisions could not be finalised on such issues as the appointment of a new CE and the elections.

11. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS FRESHWATER, UPDATE:

Mr Wilson reported that Ms Davis's report had been completed the previous week and sent to the NZ Council. Councillor Juby informed councillors that the report had been well received with the NZC Chair, Rainsford Grubb, very appreciative of Ms Davies's efforts.

Mr Wilson agreed to distribute a copy of the reports to Councillors.

12. SPORTS FISH AND GAME BIRD MANAGEMENT PLAN, UPDATE:

Mr Wilson advised that the draft management plan had been sent to iwi groups, territorial authorities, and DOC for comments/submissions. The submission date was the end of April. The option to comment on the plan will also be advertised as a public notice in the NZ Herald and the Waikato Times.

Mr Wilson further advised that a hearing committee should be established to hear any oral submissions.

It was moved;

that the Hearing Committee be comprised of the Executive Committee.

Sherrard/Kerr – CARRIED

It was agreed that if a member of the Executive Committee was unavailable for the hearing then another Councillor would be appointed.

13. WARD RANCH UPDATE:

The letter of 2nd February 2021 from the Minister of Conservation, Hon Kiritapu Allan, to the Chairman was tabled.

Mr Wilson advised that while DOC had finally agreed to the proposed discontinuance, by Council from the proceedings this still required ratification from Ward Ranch.

14. OSH UPDATE

Mr Wilson introduced his report noting that as previously mentioned the office renovations would now be more extensive due to the recent burglaries.

It was moved;

that the OSH report for February 2021 be approved.

Shaw/Juby – CARRIED

15. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Councillor Shaw advised that the wire netting on the banding pens required replacing. He suggested that this could be carried out by volunteers and staff. Mr Wilson agreed to discuss how this would be implemented with staff.

Councillor Williamson requested an update on the situation regarding game preserves. Councillor Juby replied that the NZ Council had decided that all commercial preserves would be phased out by 2025 but they were still waiting for signoff by the minister.

Councillor Sherrard informed the meeting that the funeral for Murray Young would be held at 11am on Friday 19th March at the Kaipara Cruising Club, Helensville.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 2:45pm.



Building a Positive Fish and Game/Federated Farmers Working Relationship

To: Fish & Game Regional Council Chairs
Federated Farmers Provincial Presidents

You will be aware of the discussions Federated Farmers and NZ Fish & Game have been having at the national level.

We have been building a positive working relationship nationally where we can share information, discuss issues, identify and work on problems, and make a phone call when we perceive a need or have something to work on.

We are completely aware we will not agree on everything, but if and when we do disagree, we have agreed to do so with respect for each other's position, without acrimony and at all times seeking to understand and respect the other party's view. This is a start to repairing a positive working relationship – somewhat fallen into disrepair in recent times.

Both our National Councils commend the building of relationships between our respective organisations at a regional/provincial level. This will be particularly important not only with respect to regional and district plans but also in working together on on-the-ground initiatives involving local Fish & Game personnel, farmers and community groups.

To that end attached is a spreadsheet showing relevant contact details for you to follow up when you are able. We understand that many of you have already held productive regional/provincial meetings.

There has been 150 years of relationships between farmers, game bird hunters and anglers. Many lifelong friendships have been made. Sure, there are always hiccups, but in the big picture we see relating to each other as organisations sets the right kind of message for our members to do the same.

Kind regards

Ray Grubb
Chair
NZ Fish and Game Council

Andrew Hoggard
National President
Federated Farmers of NZ (Inc)

Bi-Monthly Chief Executive's Report Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Meeting March 2021

OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Project 5111: Drift Diving

Drift dives were completed in the Awakino, Waihou, Waipa, Whakapapa and Mangatutu. There were some disappointing results with almost no fish in the Waipa and only 2.8 m of visibility in the Mangatutu. Adam will conduct instream monitoring to look at potential factor influence the dramatic decline in water clarity in the Mangatutu in March and April.

Project 5112: Banding

It was a tough year, bird numbers were lower than normal at most sites and we had to work much harder for the birds we did catch. For example, a maize stack near Turua which had well over 1000 birds coming to it a few years ago had less than 300 this year. It is important to point out that bird numbers at banding sites are not an accurate reflection of bird populations as food availability in the wider area plays a huge role in determining whether or not birds will hone in on the grain we are putting out. It does appear that we have had a poor breeding season in some of our usual strongholds such as the Hauraki Plains. This was to be expected with the lack of water around in winter and spring leading to reduced food availability of breeding and feeding habitat during critical periods. It was also evident that there were many pre fledging clutches well into January.

Parakai: Banding here produced 430 new birds and 27 recaptures for the weekend, slightly down on last year, but with one less cage available, (5 cages in 2021, 6 in 2020).

Aka Aka: Also, with 1 less cage; 213 new birds and no recaptures. This is a big improvement on last year, though hawks were again a big problem. A live-capture hawk trap that flat-packs for transport is being made-up for trial, to be used in 2022. This trap style is currently used at many airports world-wide.

Wellsford: 129 new and 16 recaptures, (total 145 ducks), in the 5 cages over 2 days. This compares with 161 ducks total over 3 days using 6 cages in 2020.

Mr Dyer's trail camera was used at the Wellsford site. The 2 SD cards contained 14,000 photos mostly of sparrows taking off and landing, but also showed, for instance, the role of the moon in terms of when the ducks feed. The photos also revealed that, no matter how far turkeys are chased away, even several kilometres and over the horizon, they always come back. This is a problem as the landowner likes to see them around. It was clear that turkeys and ducks do not share space and the ducks in front of the cage entrances moved off when the larger birds arrived.



#MOULTRIECAM 05 FEB 2021 07:28 pm

27°C

MULTIFIRE

Photo: Ducks caught on game camera at Wellsford banding site, some already caught inside set cages.

Project 5115: Population Surveys

Adam has continued to prepare for the sterile fish tag returns by advertising in the Reel Life and ordering additional tags for the third year of the study. Tag return signs were placed at Bulmer, Jones, Arapuni Lake and Landing Road ramps.

Project 5116: Trend Counts

Mr Dyer completed the trend flight of black swan and Canada geese on the Western Harbours and Waikato lakes, January 12, 2021.

Black swans: Total of 25 sites: 4,702 total swans counted in 2021 compares with 4,977 in 2020. Highlights were:

in Aotea Harbour	1,647
Kawhia Harbour	2,114
Taharoa Lakes	491
Lake Waikare	316
Lake Whangape	66

Canada geese: Total of 25 sites: 12,166 total geese counted in 2021, up from 8,528 in 2020. Top spots were:

Kawhia Harbour	1,447
Raglan Harbour	1,233
Lake Waahi	1,250
Lake Rotongaro-iti	1,633
Lake Rotongaro	2,966
Lake Waikare	1,040
Lake Whangape	992

Paradise shelduck: King Country trend flight completed January 14, 2021. Total of 25 sites: 8,245 paradise shelduck in 2021 compares with 7,979 in 2020.

North of the Harbour Bridge ground trend count January 25, 2021; After delivering banding cages to Wellsford Mr Dyer counted the following eastern coast sites, (normally counted from a plane). Northland F&G did the (northern) west coast sites in our region, as they were operating out of Parakai Airfield anyway.

	Paradise Shelduck	Canadian Geese	Black Swans
Omaha WWTP:	435		
Wellsford WWTP:	1,727		
Helensville WWTP:	24		
Snells Beach WWTP:	79		
Omaha WWTP:	435		
Tongue Farm Road pond:	162	12	
Silver Hill Road pond:	2,393		5
Tomarata Lakes:	473	70	3
Total	5728	82	8

Project 5161 Trout Releases

Adam visited Lake Pupuke to make sure there was access for the fish tanker at the gravel pit and to see if there was a venue for a kids fishing day or fish release site. Although the access to put the fish in the water is great the sharp drop-off makes the site challenging for a kids as previous events have seen many kids getting in the water. It would be wise to just do a fish release with a press release after the fact and if things go well try to plan an event with the local club in 2022.

As requested, Adam checked into Pub Charity as a potential source of funding for kids fishing days. Although Fish & Game would not be eligible for funding our associated clubs would. Tokoroa Sports Fishing Association already receive upwards of \$15,000 annually for their kids fishing event. However, we have received a complaint from the public that the Tokoroa Sports Fishing Association Take a Kid Fishing fireworks display is extremely stressing to nearby stock, staff have passed the concerns on to the club.

Adam contacted North Shore Fly Fishers Club about applying for money and the club has declined on the grounds that they do not support the release into the gravel pit section of the lake. The club believes the fish will not do well. The release will go ahead as planned and we will monitor the success of the fish over the next year.

Project 5162 Pheasant Releases

22 hand-raised pheasants banded on Waitangi Day by Mr Dyer for Mr Dave Anderson in the Waikato, after delivering banding cages to Paterangi, Te Awamutu.

Project 5181: Control.

Botulism Outbreaks: We continue to assist and maintain a watch on botulism outbreaks on Paeroa, Waihi, Huntly, Ngaruawaia, Ngatea, and Te Aroha WWTPs. WE have also had multiple reports of some dead birds on the upper Piako River in the vicinity of the Flax Block but as of, yet most outbreaks appear to be small and relatively well contained. We should be

through the highest risk period now, although outbreaks have occurred as late as the end of March in previous years. We attribute the lower than average spread and mortality associated with outbreaks this year to a mix of good fortune and better management by some agencies and companies.

A quick look at how dry it is up north and how little feed is about for cattle explains why sometimes pesky gamebirds are currently not welcome. Mostly it is parries, and often pukeko, though we still get calls about geese. One landowner was “disgusted” that the recreational hunters only got 10 parries between them near Glorit, though the fault was that the birds were not there on the day. Several hundred were back on the Monday, the day after our local season closed. Northland’s season continues for 9 days, which includes 2 weekends and perhaps that would help fix this problem. There are paradise shelduck simply everywhere at the moment and Mr Dyer’s report in November will ask that we emulate the Northland limit, (20 birds) and also their 9-day special season length.

OUTPUT 2: HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

Project 5211: RMA

Waikato District Plan

There are two remaining hearings on the Proposed Waikato District Plan before we receive a final decision from the commissioners on the proposed plan.

We will be presenting at the hearing on Stage 2 of the Waikato District Plan Review, coming up in May, which concerns natural hazards and the effects of climate change. Stage 2 has consisted of the development of a new set of proposed objectives, policies and rules to manage the risk to people and structures on land subject to natural hazards and to mitigate and/or adapt to the effects of climate change. In our submission we sought to be able to undertake earthworks for conservation activities and to be able to construct maimai as permitted activities (not requiring resource consent) in the Flood Plain Management Area and Flood Ponding Area’s.

We are looking to also present on the General Rezoning hearing also coming up in May. This hearing concerns rezoning applications by landowners who wish to be able to subdivide their land but cannot do so based on the current zoning that applies to their land. Some of these areas include zone changes from rural to residential and industrial in areas adjacent to or close to wetlands valued for their gamebird resource.

National Environmental Standards for Freshwater Regulations

Mischa prepared a submission on behalf of Fish and Game Council seeking amendment to the new National Environmental Standards for Freshwater regulations. This comes after concerns were raised that the new regulations will have a considerable detrimental impact on Fish and Game licence holders and on Council’s own operations regarding the maintenance and construction of maimai, and wetland restoration works. The submission seeks amendment to the NES-FW regulations to provide for those activities in wetlands. The submission has since been sent to the Minister for the Environment seeking to adopt the amendments put forward in the submission.

Puke Coal

The hearing regarding the Puke Coal Ltd consent application was held on 2 March. We decided to submit a statement for the hearing instead of formal evidence. Our statement set out our reasons for opposing the application.

We made a submission back in February 2020 opposing the application by Puke Coal Ltd regarding their stormwater management as part of their consents for coal mining and municipal solid waste landfilling operations. Our concerns were primarily in relation to the effects of the discharge on the Waitawhara Stream, Lake Waahi and subsequently, the Waikato River. We then had further consultation with the applicant's consultants. Several draft conditions were agreed to in principle prior to the hearing however there remained a few points of concern which were highlighted in the statement we presented at the hearing.

We noted that we do not support the application's heavy reliance on the use of management plans to achieve future environmental outcomes. Of concern is the lack of clearly defined timeframes and water quality targets within the management plans, which are required to achieve water quality improvements and provide certainty that the application will achieve the Vision and Strategy.

Open Country Dairy

Open Country Dairy Ltd continues to work on revising their consent application and has sought more time from the Environment Court to refine details and consult with all parties. Mediation is therefore still on hold. While the revised application has substantially improved from what was originally proposed there remain some outstanding concerns which we are working through with the applicant. We will know by the end of April whether we will be moving ahead with mediation or not.

WRC and F&G have provided formal feedback to the applicant who have subsequently sought a further extension before a determination is made on how to proceed with the case. OCD anticipates three to four weeks will be required to collate information across a range of scientific disciplines and then prepare and submit that further information to all parties. Taking into account a reasonable time for the parties to then consider the Appellant's further information, and noting the Easter break occurs at the beginning of April, legal counsels have sought the following determination.

The parties advise the Court by 5.00pm on Friday, 30 April 2021 whether they propose to submit a draft consent order for the Court's consideration or if they require a judicial telephone conference to schedule the proceedings for mediation or a hearing,

Tatau Cooperative Dairy Company Ltd

Tatau Cooperative Dairy has released their AEE which Clare is going over. They are still in the consultation process where any updates will be further released. Any concerns over the AEE, we will address in a meeting mid-March to try to work through these.

Max Birt and Lumbercorp consents Lake Waikare

We have provided further feedback to the applicant and have requested several changes pertaining to the way limits are expressed in the conditions. Although we submitted on the original applications in 2015 it is now looking likely that there will be a limited re-notification acknowledging the changes to the applications over that time. Good progress has been made and we appear to have agreement in principle regarding several of the topics still under contention.

Whangamarino Weir Memorandum: A further responses has been prepared and sent to the Resource Use Directorate proposing a way forward for the Whangamarino Weir Review. In November 2020, RUD provided an updated memo that provides a summary of key issues that remain outstanding. It provided a useful summary of the issues that the review of the existing weir structure may focus on, while noting that the consent holders have a different interpretation of some of the issues it raised.

In considering the overall objectives that parties are seeking in respect of the hydrological management of Whangamarino wetland, we proposed a phased technical and consultation process to review the weir in a broader environmental setting. To enable a range of hydrological scenarios to be considered for the long-term management of the system.

In particular, it was proposed to undertake technical work that:

- provides a better understand the wider dynamics of the existing hydrological environment including the operation of the Whangamarino Weir and the LWFCs; and
- identifies 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.

It was also stated by DOC that, if changes to the Whangamarino Weir are proposed as a result of the above, DOC and F&G will then seek to reconsent the Whangamarino Weir (earlier than the current expiry of the consent in 2027) and determine ways in which any works can be funded.

In addition, DOC committed to work with F&G and 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).

Healthy Rivers Plan Change 1

Sarah Ongley and Clare Robertson met with Waikato Regional Council to discuss reasons behind Fish and Game's appeal. The meeting was not to negotiate the points of our appeal – more just an opportunity for the council to understand the basis for our appeal. The next steps are that between now and September the council will split all appellants into working groups based on similar points of appeal/likeminded parties. The council will then hold facilitated meetings between these parties to discuss key topics to hopefully resolves as much

as possible before moving to mediation. Come September the formal mediation process will begin.

National developments

The Government announced its staged Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) reform process in February based on the comprehensive review carried out last year. The RMA will be repealed and replaced with new laws this parliamentary term. Key changes include stronger national direction, one single combined plan per region, and more focus on natural environmental outcomes.

The three new Acts will be the:

- **Natural and Built Environments Act (NBA)** to provide for land use and environmental regulation (this would be the primary replacement for the RMA).
- **Strategic Planning Act (SPA)** to integrate with other legislation relevant to development, and require long-term regional spatial strategies.
- **Climate Change Adaptation Act (CAA)** to address complex issues associated with managed retreat and funding and financing adaptation.

A special select committee inquiry will consider an exposure draft of the NBA Bill from mid-year – which will be our first opportunity to submit on the bill. Then when the final bill is introduced to parliament at the end of the year, we will get a second opportunity to submit on the bill. It is expected that all three laws will be passed by the end of 2022. NZ Council will be asked to develop a strategy, using input from the whole of Fish and Game, on this very important legislation. Communication with our licence holders will be an important part.

Project 5221: Fish & Game land.

Fish DNA Survey

Adam completed the “Wetland eDNA survey of the Aka Aka, Piggott, Blythen/McKenzie, Dean, Emmett, Cox, Central Shepherd, North Shepherd and Williamson Wetlands” and corresponding report. In total 285 samples were taken primarily on foot or by bike due to a lack of access into the wetlands. Only the Williamson Wetland had mudfish detected and the report will be added to the comprehensive wetlands work consent application.

North Shepherd Wetland.

Golden dodder outside the DoC fenced control area since sprayed and resprayed by Mr Dyer with Metsulfuron/Glyphosate/wetting agent mix.

Stinkwort has lately reappeared near the northern end of the North Shepherd Wetland and has again been sprayed by Mr Dyer. This weed as aptly named when it is bruised, and the sap exposed.

7 sealed rubbish bags of a material, possibly asbestos, dumped by Island Block Road, reported to Waikato District Council for removal.

The security chain at Island Block Road end was cut and a replacement padlock put in apparently by an Electrix worker. This considerably weakened the whole system and anyone

could have broken the lock and gained entry. This has since been replaced entirely by Mr Dyer with a new, (half price!), ABUS security chain. This recreates the previous situation where there are just 2 padlocks and both are once again inside the recessed gate metal pipe where they cannot be cut with bolt cutters. Electrix have been given a spare key to the shrouded F&G padlock.

A trapezoid shape of around 2m x 2m has been cut from the top of one of the gabion baskets on the far side of the weir. Whether this is overlooked old damage or new is hard to judge. In recent months the weir was inspected, repaired and then independently audited. Surely this damage would not have been overlooked? It is not visible side-on from the true left side of the weir owing to weed growth.

North Emmett Wetland:

Another incursion by sheep into the planted area. In this instance, 3 large trees had fallen over the boundary fence and the sheep walked in across the flattened wires. The trees, (pine and eucalypt), have since been cut up and stacked nearby by the Northern Gamebird Manager and the grazer alerted to retrieve his flock and fix the fence.

Aka Aka Wetland:

A review of claim tags identified in the recent swamp audit by Mr Dyer revealed there are currently 16 marked up ponds. These pondholders will shortly be invited to form a user group.

Williamson Wetland.

2x golden dodder sites checked. Some pampas plants showing signs of life since the recent large working bee were re-sprayed, for instance alongside Falls Road. Also, stinkwort, which has reappeared on the entry drive.

Blythen Wetland:

The guys at the Blythen Wetland boast that their vermin tally is now:

35 rats
120 possums
22 ferrets/stoats
4 hedgehogs
14 feral cats.

This information has since been relayed by Mr Dyer to the 18 pondholders at the Dean Wetland across the Mangatawhiri River, to stimulate discussion about emulating this effort there.

As indicated earlier, the Swamp-Comp (predator trapping for prizes), is on again in Hunting & Fishing stores. A record 3,008 mustelid tails were received in 2020 from 289 entries. The chances of winning one of the many nice prizes must still be pretty good.

Project 5231: Other Land

David conducted a site visit with Paula Reeves, WRC ecologist to assess the areas earmarked for projects this summer which have now been put on hold due to the new NES provisions. Some of these projects will now require consents. A further meeting is scheduled with WRC staff to try and determine a way that these projects can be conducted legally, whilst not providing disincentives to landowners through extra time and cost burden.

Mr Dyer has done botulism checks on “hotspots”, some more than once, including Mangere, Omaha, Snells Beach, Wellsford, Wairewa and Helensville Waste Water Treatment Plants also Straka’s Lagoon wildlife refuge. Also liaising with Bird Rescue, SPCA and other participants. So far, “touch-wood”, the northern area seems to have escaped lightly. The few birds found dead have all been disposed of to avoid contagion.

Several hunters baches checked off Buchanan Rd, at Orongo near Thames. One local hunter believes the future of these is in doubt, though the details are sketchy.

A small wetland, (just under 2 acres), off Green Road near Parakai has recently been drained. This historic wetland is visible on aerial photographs dating back to 1942 but was drained in 2019 shortly after the title changed hands. Auckland Council staff have inspected this drainage, which is in the process of being reclaimed by approximately 20 trucks loads of clay fill and also timber demolition material. They advised the landowner that they would assist him to further lower his water table by asking NZTA to lower their roadside drain invert that leads to the Kaipara River. Clearly Auckland Council have a lot of different idea about what Section 6 of the RMA means, (i.e. wetlands as “Matters of National Importance”), compared with the Waikato Regional Council. This would suggest no wetland in the former Rodney area is safe.

OUTPUT 3: PARTICIPATION

Project 5311: Access negotiation

Adam contacted the Pickens for access on the Waione and was asked to close the river by Mr. Pickens. After a prolonged negotiation it was agreed the Mr. Pickens would continue to allow access to anglers if a catch and release restriction was placed on the river above Waione Road (his property). Adam will also have a meeting in March with the trust who have closed the Waimiha Stream.

Project 5341: Other publications

Waikato Lakes Book: David has been contributing to the ‘birds’ chapter for a new book to be released on the Waikato Lakes.

Mr Dyer’s 2-page article on duck banding published in Ducks Unlimited Flight Magazine.

Mr Dyer organized publicity through Richie Cosgrove, F&G National Office, around the North of the Harbour Bridge and King Country Special Paradise Shelduck Seasons. As a result of Richie’s media release Mr Dyer did a radio interview and had a Newshub article published.

The success of this can perhaps be judged by the approx., 150 permits issued for the King Country special season restart.

The rules surrounding “recreation” under level 3 lockdown were summarised by Mr Dyer for hunters. Although we came out of L3 just in time for the North of the Harbour Bridge Special Paradise Shelduck Season, these same rules may now apply to control permits.

OUTPUT 4: PUBLIC PROMOTIONS

Project 5431: liaison advocacy

Mr Dyer assisted Dr Shaun Wilkinson of Wilderlab NZ Ltd in Miramar, Wellington to obtain several dozen grey teal feathers for research purposes.

OUTPUT 5: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Project 5511 Ranging/Training

Mr Dyer liaised with Senior Police Constable Chris Jujnovich to patrol in the Wellsford area during the Special Paradise Shelduck Season. He was also assisted by Constable Thomas Hatfull, who noted that one hunter near Matakana was quite insistent that he had a \$5 permit and so he could go shooting on the second weekend of the Special Shelduck Season. Of course, Matakana is not in the King Country. There are also reports of 2 hunters shooting geese and also shelduck with a scoped .22 near Kaukapakapa.

Because ranging in the northern Special Paradise Shelduck Season was being done in L3 lockdown, Mr Dyer had to prepare a “Covid Plan” to demonstrate that all necessary precautions were being put in place when ranger contact was made with hunters, especially on private land.

Adam conducted ranging when drift diving checking anglers on the Whakapapa and upper Waihou.

Project 5841: National liaison.

Adam has been working closely with Northland on a potential koi carp release in Kai Iwi lakes at the request of Rudi Hoetjes. Adam attended a virtual meeting with Iwi, Northland Regional Council and DOC. Adam then visited the lakes 24 hours later to train Northland Regional Council staff on the use of carp traps and netting techniques. During the visit Adam used a drone to hunt for carp over 8km of the lake edge. Adam will continue to assist where needed. This is a unique situation due to an unsubstantiated threat of a koi release by angry trout fishermen after iwi refused to allow trout stocking in the lake. There has also been a confirmed release of koi in Lake Rototoa (Ototoa) about 90km to the south of Kai Iwi in the Auckland/Waikato Region.

**B. Wilson,
Chief Executive**