

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF

If you require further elaboration or clarification of items contained herein, or any other matters relating to F&G business, please don't hesitate to contact your local ward councillor or the office.

Matters arising from Council Meeting of 12 June 2021

1. The Chairman requested Councillors to observe a minute's silence in memory of the late Mr John Atkinson, former Auckland/Waikato Councillor for many years.
2. Councillors discussed the state of Lake Waikare and the various consents held by the Waikato Regional Council for the lake. It was agreed that staff be asked to prepare a report providing background on these consents and the recent advocacy work by Fish & Game. Councillor Williamson stressed the importance of keeping the lake's issues in the "public eye" with an ongoing publicity campaign. Mr Klee advised that the raising the lake, whilst a step in the right direction, would not improve the overall water quality parameters in the short to medium term. It needs to be recognised that restoration of Lake Waikare will be an intergenerational endeavour. Councillors agreed that the Minister of the Environment, Hon David Parker, is informed of Councillors concerns with Lake Waikare and that he is invited to visit the lake with Councillors.
3. It was agreed that Gary Fraser be awarded Council's Merit Award for his leadership and many years of work on the Blythen Wetland.
4. The recommendations of the NZF&GC on the 2021/22 licence fees were tabled. Councillors expressed their disappointment that the non-resident licence had not been substantially increased. Councillor Sherrard expressed his disappointment at the removal of the \$1 dedicated to game bird research funding. He emphasised that it was crucial that licence holders could see that Fish & Game was active with research. Other Councillors expressed similar views, and it was agreed that these concerns should be conveyed to the NZF&GC.
5. The proposal from the Eastern Fish & Game council regarding the concept of 'Saturday-ising' the opening of the fishing season was considered. Mr Wilson observed that it was a tradition for many anglers to take the day off work, but that generally "Opening Day" was not the big event that it was in the Eastern region. It was agreed that there be no change to the existing date for the opening of the fishing season.
6. In reply to an enquiry about the sterile fish project in Lake Arapuni, Dr Daniel stated that sterile fish were being caught at a much lower rate than their non-sterile counterparts, which was encouraging and presumably due to the non-sterile fish reaching early maturity and congregating below the Waipapa dam where they were vulnerable to anglers.
7. Councillors discussed the recommendation in the recent Governance Review that the Auckland/Waikato region amalgamates with Northland region. It was emphasised that there had been no analyse of the financial implications of the proposed amalgamation nor their impact on the delivery of services. It was agreed that the Acting Minister of Conservation be informed of Council's concerns regarding the proposed amalgamation of the Northland and Auckland/Waikato councils.

Matters arising from the Chief Executive's Report

- **Harvest Surveys and Hunter Feedback;** Stories of success were few with only isolated pockets of the region appearing to fair well. We need rain and quickly to recharge aquifers, fill seasonal wetlands and allow birds to get into good condition for the breeding season. We then need a prolonged wet spell well into late spring/early summer to maintain those ephemeral areas and increase duckling survival. Another drought would be bordering on disastrous for the duck population.
- **Trout releases:** Two-year-old rainbow trout were released into Lake Pupuke's Quarry Lake (400 fish), Parkinson Lake (200 fish) and Lake Moana-nui (200 fish). Initial reports on the Quarry Lake release were excellent with a father & daughter pair landing 30 fish in a day.
- **Wetlands Definition:** Mischa Davis prepared a feedback paper on the recently released draft *Essential Freshwater Interpretation Guidance: Wetlands Definition* from the Ministry for the Environment which seeks to clarify the definition of 'natural wetland' in national regulations for wetlands.
- **Waikato District Plan:** Our submissions opposing the following zoning changes were all accepted in the consultant reports (Section 42a reports), and thus it is very unlikely that the proposed zoning changes will proceed.
 - Ward Demolition proposed change from Rural to Industrial next to our North Shepherd Wetland.
 - Kainga Moana Nui Limited from Rural to Village, a property on the shores of Lake Waikare.
 - Madsen Lawrie Consultants from Village to Residential, and Rural to Village at 114 Dean Road.
- **Healthy Rivers:** The Waikato Regional Council came back to us mid-May with their response on our Environment Court appeals to the proposed Plan Change 1 (Healthy Rivers) for the Waikato River catchment. The WRC stated whether they supported or opposed each of our 121 appeals and the reasons for this. Sarah Ongley (consultant RMA lawyer) and Clare Robertson are going through the appeal points and the WRC responses, to work out which appeals require further evidence for the mediation meetings which are scheduled for September.
- **Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) Submissions:** Submissions have been made on both the Paeroa and Tokoroa WWTP consent applications.
- **Williamson Wetland Compliance Audit:** We received a high level of compliance overall; however it was noted that a site visit would be preferable for the next audit and therefore issues such as adherence to the weed management plan will require vigilance.
- **Whangamarino Weir Section 128 Review:** David Klee has attended 2 meetings to further develop the technical work plan for this project.
- **Markup disputes:** The earlier than normal mark-up day caught plenty out this year and when coupled with competition for hunting spots caused by the dry conditions led to a large number of disputes that were dealt with by staff.
- **Shooting under power:** We received multiple complaints of hunters shooting under power. The police also received multiple calls as the hunters were allegedly discharging their firearms towards the expressway and in the direction of residents that were working on their section next to the Waikato River. The use of motorised boats for 'drift shooting' remains one of the biggest compliance issues in this region and may require legislative changes.