

**Agenda For The Meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council
And AGM On 30th November 2023
At Roxburgh I Site, 120 Scotland Street, Roxburgh
Starting 11.45am with a light lunch**

Timetable	Council Meeting
11.45 am	Lunch
12.15 pm	Councillor Only Session
12.30 pm	Council Meeting Begins
2.45 pm	Afternoon Tea
3.00 pm	AGM and Public Forum
3:15pm	Public Excluded Session
5.00 pm	Meeting Ends

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1.0 Present and Apologies

2.0 Matters to be raised not on the agenda

3.0 Declarations of Interest

4.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

**Minutes for the Meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council
On Thursday 28th September 2023
At Otago Fish and Game Council Office
Cnr Hanover and Harrow Streets, Dunedin**

1.0 Present and Apologies

Present: Colin Weatherall (Chair), Adrian McIntyre, Mike Barker, Rick Boyd, Ian Cole, Vicky May, Blair Trevathan.

Present via video conferencing: Ray Grubb.

In attendance: Ian Hadland (CE), David Priest (Central Otago Operations Manager), Bruce Quirey (Communications Officer).

Apologies: Blair Trevathan (late arrival), John Highton, Paulette Tamati-Elliffe (Ngāi Tahu appointee).

The Chairperson Cr Weatherall welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 12.40pm.

2.0 Matters to be raised not on the agenda

None.

3.0 Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson asked Councillors to update and sign Declarations of Interest. Declarations were tabled. See attachment. Cr Cole, a professional fly-fishing guide, declared a conflict of interest in the application by Aotearoa Anglers Ltd for drift fishing. Crs Cole and Boyd, as Clutha Fisheries Trust trustees, noted a conflict of interest regarding the proposed purchase of the Cromwell field base building.

4.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Moved (Cr McIntyre/Cr Cole)

That the minutes of the Council Meeting of Otago Fish & Game Council held on 20th July 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Carried unanimously.

5.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Cr May asked why her request for the Licensing Working Party to consider implementation of the AfterPay system was not taken up. Mr Hadland said it was an issue of timing, as the licensing system had been under reform to accommodate Designated Waters. It was not off the agenda but had not been a priority.

Cr McIntyre asked why DW was not included on fishing licence cards. The CE said it would be difficult to put DW on the cards because DW licences could be bought progressively through the season. Cr Grubb said he would like to record displeasure about the extra DW licence charge for New Zealand residents. The CE noted the Council had previously agreed to the licensing changes including the fees.

Regarding item 12.4 Conservation Board in the minutes, Cr Barker said he wrote to the NZC Chairperson Barry Barnes to ask if NZC intended to take an interest in the review of conservation management strategies given the implications on hunter and angler access. Cr Barnes had replied to Cr Barker that it would be considered at the NZC meeting, and indeed the NZC meeting discussed the review of the Conservation Act and Wildlife Act.

6.0 Health and Safety Report

The CE noted an elderly participant had collapsed during a Take A Kid Fishing event. The CE and a colleague had administered first aid, and the man was revived. There was discussion about the need for a defibrillator. The CE undertook to bring a proposal to the Council to purchase a portable defibrillator.

Cr Barker asked the CE about the maritime safety audit. The CE said the national audit had found some deficiencies in other regions but would not affect the Councils operations with the exception of a delay in certification of new staff who had recently completed qualifications.

Moved (Cr May/Cr Cole)

That the Health and Safety Report be received.

Carried unanimously.

The Chair acknowledged the report by the Administration officer and thanked her for her efforts.

7.0 Items Requiring Decisions

7.1 Draft Meeting Schedule Otago Fish and Game Council 2023 -2024

Cr May noted a date error in the draft meeting schedule. The CE said he change the November 30, 2024, date to November 28, 2024.

Moved (Cr May/Cr Boyd)

That Council adopt the draft meeting schedule for 2023-2024.

Carried unanimously.

Moved (Cr Weatherall/Cr McIntyre)

1. **That feedback is provided to NZC that Otago Council has no issues with the draft meeting schedule they have provided.**
2. **Council invite Southland Councillors to a joint meeting in Tapanui or Gore on the 25th July 2024.**

Carried unanimously.

The CE advised that Southland F&GC would sign an MOU with Otago next week. Cr May suggested Otago F&GC should sign an MOU with CSI region.

The meeting skipped ahead in the agenda to the public excluded session to hear a submission from Aotearoa Anglers Ltd regarding their drift boating application. Staff members David Priest, Nigel Paragreen, Caelan Church and Bruce Quirey were present.

Moved (Cr Boyd/Cr Cole)

That the meeting move into the public excluded session.

Carried unanimously.

8.0 Public Excluded Items

The public excluded meeting began with a presentation from Aotearoa Anglers on their application for drift fishing on the Deans Bank section of the Clutha River/Mata-au and Matukituki River.

8.4 Moved (Cr May/Cr Boyd)

1. **That the report on the Consent application for Aotearoa Anglers Ltd: Drift Fishing on the Clutha River / Mata-au, Matukituki River, Lake Hāwea, and Lake Wānaka be received.**
2. **That a full APA be provided, subject to the conditions listed in Appendix B-1.**
3. **That Fish & Game and the applicants continue to build a collaborative relationship in monitoring this consent, and Council come to an agreement regarding the management of the activity within the above locations, with preferable consideration to an adaptive management regime.**

4. That Council advise the applicant and the QLDC that there is no intention to change the regulation prohibiting fishing from a boat in the Deans Bank section of the Clutha River.

Carried. Cr Barker and Cr Grubb against. Cr Cole abstained.

8.1 Confirm Draft OF&GC Public Excluded Minutes from 20th July 2023

Moved (Cr McIntyre/Cr May)

That the public excluded minutes of the meeting on 20th July 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Carried unanimously.

8.2 Bullock Creek Storm Water Issues – Legal Advice

Moved (Cr Barker/Cr Trevathan)

- **That the Councils lawyer write to QLDC requesting a without prejudice meeting to discuss potential solutions.**

Carried unanimously.

8.3 CFT Building Purchase Update

Moved (Cr Trevathan/Cr McIntyre)

- **That the Council authorise the Chair and CE to sign the sale and purchase agreement for the property at 2 Rees Crescent Cromwell subject to the sale of its Chardonnay Street property.**
- **Agree that the balance of the payment (ie that not covered by the funds from the sale of Chardonnay Street section) to conclude the purchase of the Rees Crescent building is to be funded from the Councils *General Reserve* and the NZC notified in line with policy.**

Carried unanimously.

Moved (Cr Barker/Cr May)

That the meeting move out of non-public.

Carried unanimously.

7.2 New Zealand Council (NZC) Policy Feedback

The CE said he was a bit concerned about the New Zealand Council's wish for so much policy, which had bogged down staff and council. The NZC could not develop policy which usurped a region's statutory functions. It was a statutory function of Otago F&GC, for instance, to develop a personnel policy. Cr Barker said he did not think there was any intention by NZC to override regional councils.

The CE said the draft **conflict of interest policy** was topical and came through in the Ministerial Review strongly. Otago F&GC had conflicts of interest policy

in both governance policy and standing orders. In his view, the Council did not want a third set of conflict-of-interest documents. He recommended the Council look at the draft policy and adopt anything that had not been included in the Council's existing policies. Predetermination was one matter that was missing.

Cr Weatherall said the key driver of the draft conflict of interest policy was the Auditor-General's direction, which covered all local authorities and statutory bodies. Cr Grubb said a key driver in the Ministerial Review was that councillors at NZC were not relinquishing regional council roles in decision making and had a conflict of interest.

Cr Weatherall discussed the terms of reference for the Future Working Group. He said there was some discussion around ward structures in regional councils but there was nothing scary. The CE said the Council might need to consider its ward structure before the next election.

Mr Hadland said the terms of reference for the future finance working group included a five-year business plan for the entire organisation. He was not sure how that fitted together with Otago F&GC's three-year strategic plan and 10-year plan. He did not believe it was NZC's role to establish a five-year business plan for the entire organisation which would also cover regions.

The CE asked if the Council was happy for general feedback to NZC, based on the comments in the agenda, to go to the NZC.

9.0 DRAFT Financial Report 31st August 2023

The CE invited questions from councillors. A question about forecasting licence was answered by the CE who agreed licence forecasting was an inexact science but it had worked reasonably well to date.

Moved (Cr May/Cr Cole)

1 That the Draft Finance and licencing report be received.

2 That the 2022/23 draft financial accounts be approved for audit.

Carried unanimously.

Cr Boyd noted some non-resident anglers had already bought Designated Waters day licences for the start of the 2023/24 season.

10.0 Chief Executive's Report – September 2023

Cr Cole asked about a CSI survey of anglers on the economic impact of the canal fishery. The CE said the canals were important fisheries and the data would be fed back to Meridian Energy.

He said the Mata-au Sports Fish Trust documents were getting signed. The next step would be to get incorporated into a society. There was discussion around who would do the administration for the trust. Fish & Game could provide interim support.

Because of the delay forming the trust, staff were going back to Contact Energy and developing a summer programme.

On governance training, Cr Cole said it should be done every three years at the start of each new term.

Moved (Cr Weatherall/ Cr McIntyre)

That the Chief Executive's report be received.

Carried unanimously.

Cr Weatherall acknowledged the efforts and challenges of the Central Otago operations manager David Priest in the CE's absence and thanked him.

11.0 RMA Planning and Consents Report

The CE said the Freshwater Planning Process (FFP) and the non-FFP were completed, but staff might need to invest time in helping the panel to reach a decision. The process had almost exhausted funding allocated from reserves. The Environmental Planner wanted a contingency of \$20,000 from reserves to complete any other work required.

Cr Grubb wanted to place on record on the quality of work by Mr Paragreen on the Regional Policy Statement and the Land and Water Regional Plan. He also wanted to record severe disappointment at the ORC deciding on a hugely extended time frame to make any improvement on the Manuherekia River.

There was discussion about a submission from Fish & Game in opposition to an application to undertake suction dredge gold mining and to disturb the bed of the Clutha River/Mata-au.

Moved (Cr May/Cr Cole)

That the RMA Planning and Consents report be received.

Carried unanimously.

12.0 Committee & Delegate Reports

12.1 CFT

CFT trustee Cr Cole discussed the proposed sale of the Cromwell building to Otago Fish & Game, saying the proceeds of any benefit to CFT by default benefit this organisation and licence holders. CFT met Central Otago District Council representatives over access in the upper Clutha and were well received. Difficulties with access were increasing, and it was noted that any unformed legal road went to a water body it could not be closed. Cr Cole also discussed summer projects, including an approach by ORC to support Nevis non-migratory fish protection.

12.2 NZC

The Otago representative to NZC, Cr Barker, discussed a summary by NZC CEO Corina Jordan on the national council meeting in August. This included concerns about delays on the completion of a guides licence. The guides licence was scheduled to come before the next NZC meeting in November and hopefully would be resolved. Cr Barker also discussed the research subcommittee, including a proposal for a \$160,000 economic survey of trout fishing. NZC had said the study needed to be a national assessment. Other matters included an RMA update, the proposed employment of a lawyer, the Ministerial Review, and te reo Maori and governance advisers.

The CE commented on the NZC budget, noting regional councils, unlike the national council, did not have the option to roll over unspent funding.

12.3 Ngai Tahu

The CE/chair noted an apology from the Ngāi Tahu representative.

12.4 Conservation Board

The CE said the Conservation Board appointed new board members and noted an apology.

13.0 Correspondence

13.1 NZC to Otago

13.1.1 In Relation to the Magazine and Guides Licence

13.1.2 Guides Licence and Fish & Game Magazine

13.1.3 No Ministry for the Environment Funding

13.1.4 Wildlife Act 1953 Review

13.2 Otago to NZC**13.2.1 Potential Loss of Fish and Game Magazine****13.2.2 Guides Licence****13.3 General Correspondence In****13.3.1 Kate Berkett: NZ Battery Project****13.4 General Correspondence Out****13.4.1 Thankyou Richard Twining**

Moved (Cr Weatherall/Cr Boyd)

That correspondence be noted and received.

Carried unanimously.

14.0 Items to be Received or Noted

The CE invited questions or comments.

In the SMFP annual report, Cr Boyd noted on Page 72, the fourth paragraph should have said both below, not above, the Young and below the Wilkin had similar sequence counts.

Moved (Cr May/Cr Barker)

That the following items be received and noted:

- **Sports Fish Management Plan Report 2023**
- **Compliance Summary Report**
- **Backcountry Fishery and Controlled Fishery Report for 2022/2023**
- **Upper Clutha Catchment Land-locked Salmon Spawning Surveys**

Carried unanimously.

15.0 General Business

Cr May asked if Fish & Game was able to review its logo to be more representative and inclusive.

The Chairperson thanked the Council for their patience. He said it was worth recording the property acquisition agreement and the signing of trustees for the hatchery trust.

The meeting closed at 4.40pm.

5.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

6.0 Health and Safety Report October/November 2023

Events/Work Requiring OHS Planning – Job hazard sheets completed

- Wetland Planting days in Cromwell
- Soft bait fishing classes
- Spawning surveys
- Planting days Takitakitoa

OHS Audits - internal

Completed audits:

- Boat procedures and equipment.
- Staff Qualifications update
- Main Hazard Register update

Next audit area:

- Hazardous substances – December 2023

Incidents/Accidents/Near Misses/New Hazards

- Concern around alcohol effected anglers at Manorburn opening day noted. Low risk of harm but Rangers did interview some potentially difficult people towards the end of the day before withdrawing.
- Accident - Limited space in storage lock up, boat knocked to neighbours stored items. No harm to anyone.
- Traffic near miss - Note how dangerous the road is, especially in Central Otago with so many tourists - staff to take care.
- Accident - A lump of concrete was dropped on a foot. Luckily steel capped boots on. Small graze but no tissue damage.
- Incident – A ranger made a tactical withdrawal from a group unlicensed anglers at Lake Waihola. He conducted himself well and was unharmed, thanks to his ranger safety training. Staff are looking into the matter and have involved the police.

Otago Fish and Game Council Policy

- Attached is the Otago Fish and Game Council Health and Safety Policy document for annual adoption by Council.

Training Completed

- One staff first aid refresher course

General Discussions, Actions

- Dunedin Fire Extinguishers serviced, new CO2 added for electrical fires.
- A portable defibrillator has been purchased and installed in the Dunedin office. It is a portable unit so also available for outdoor F&G events.

Recommendation

1. That this report be received
2. Council adopt the Health and Safety policy as circulated and authorised the Chair to sign.

Sharon Milne
Administration Officer
November 2023



OTAGO FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Introduction

The Otago Fish and Game Council (the Council) is a 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU) in terms of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) and associated regulations - Health and Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations 2016.

The Council is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for its workers - staff, councillors, volunteers and other persons (visitors, clients and contractors) in its 'workplace' and to complying with relevant legislation, New Zealand standards and approved codes of practice.

The Council has a 'primary duty of care' or the primary responsibility for the health and safety of workers and others influenced by its work.

Scope

This policy applies to all Otago Fish and Game Council 'workers' and others influenced by its work in any place a worker or other person goes or is likely to be while at work or where work is carried out be it permanent or intermittent.

Key elements of the policy

The Council will comply with the provisions of legislation dealing with health and safety in the workplace, by:

- providing a safe physical and emotional work environment;
- ensuring a health and safety strategy/plan is in place and that engagement and consultation with staff on the strategy occurs;
- providing adequate facilities and any safety equipment deemed necessary, including ensuring access and ensuring property and equipment is safe to use and workers are not exposed to hazards;
- ensuring there is an effective method in place for identifying, assessing and controlling hazards. This includes the recording and investigating of injuries, and reporting serious harm incidents;
- having a commitment to a culture of continuous improvement.

Liability and personal liability

The Council, its chief executive (CE) and staff are responsible for implementing health and safety policy. Councillors and the CE are 'officers' in terms of the legislation and while the Council may be liable, and the CE and workers may be personally liable, for a failure to meet

health and safety obligations an individual councillor cannot be prosecuted under the HSWA for failing to comply with his or her duties because they are volunteer officers.

The CE has primary responsibility for implementing this policy including:

- exercising due diligence in accordance with the provisions of the health and safety legislation;
- taking all reasonable steps to protect workers, volunteers and visitors in the workplace from unsafe or unhealthy conditions or practices;
- ensuring there are effective processes to deal with unacceptable behaviour, such as non compliance;
- providing information and training opportunities to workers;
- keeping the Chair and Council fully informed, including reporting at bi-monthly meetings, and advising them of any emergency situations as soon as possible.
- Resourcing Health and Safety appropriately.

Everyone is responsible

All workers (employees, contractors, and volunteer workers) are expected to play their role in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace through:

- being involved in improving health and safety systems at work;
- following instructions, rules, procedures and safe ways of working;
- reporting all injuries, incidents and near misses;
- maintain training qualifications required for position held;
- reporting any pain or discomfort as soon as possible;
- helping new staff members, trainees, volunteers and visitors to the workplace understand the risks and hazards and why they exist;
- reporting any hazards, new hazards or health and safety issues through the reporting system;
- keeping the workplace tidy to minimise the risk of any trips and falls;
- wearing or using protective clothing and equipment when required to minimise exposure to workplace hazards;
- taking reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of others in the workplace.

All others (e.g. visitors) in the workplace must:

- follow all instructions, rules and procedures while in the workplace;
- report all injuries, incidents and near misses to the Chief Executive;
- wear or use protective clothing and equipment as an when required to minimise their exposure to hazards.

Signed: _____ (Chief Executive)

Signed: _____ (Chairman)

Adopted: 30th November 2023

7.0 Items Requiring Decisions

7.1 Draft Game Notice 2024 (Gamebird hunting regulations)

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend the draft 2024 Game Gazette Regulations to Council.

Changes proposed

The Council generally aims for consistency of regulations between seasons. This, alongside with seeking alignment of regulations between regions, seeks to reduce the confusion associated with small one-off changes on an annual basis.

A request was received from the landowner of the Ashley Downs Closed Game Area in Clinton to remove the Closed Game Area status from the property. The site has been visited by staff and it is recommended the closed game area status is removed.

Paradise shelduck limits are subject to the January 2024 moult counts.

Gamebird Species Monitoring

Greylards

Aerial surveys were completed in April 2023 and reported to Councils May 2023 meeting. The greylard trend count of 4,920 is lower than the average of previous surveys, which was 5,780.

The greylard harvest for 2023 was 45,000 birds, around 2,500 less than last year's harvest and significantly below the long-term average of 57,200 birds.

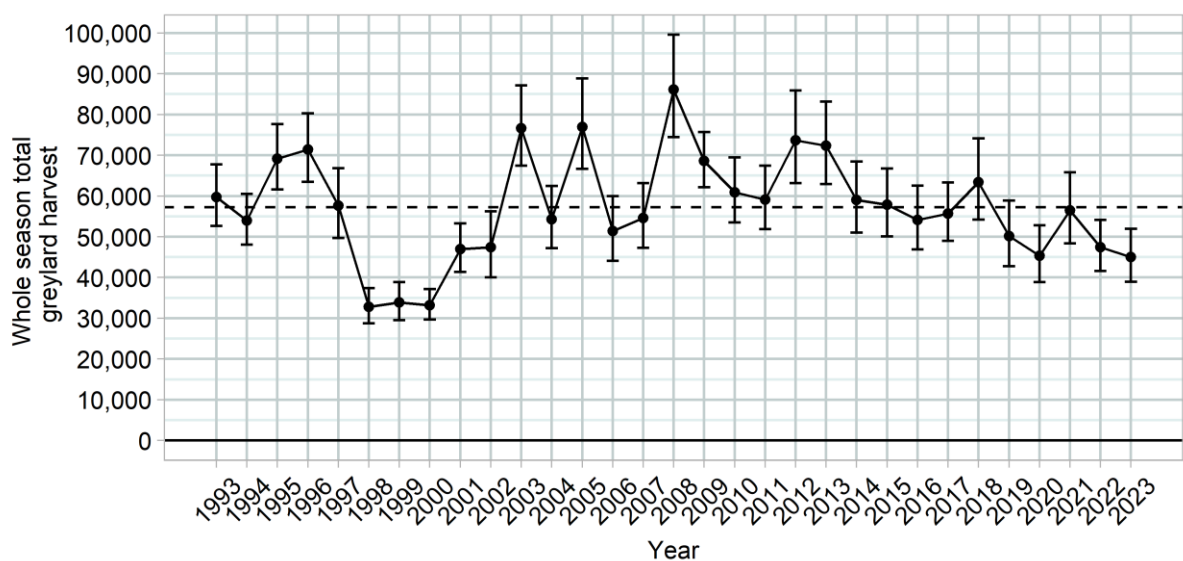


Figure 1. Greylard season harvest 1993-2023 with 95% confidence intervals and the long-term average (dotted line)

There are no indications that there is an issue with sustainability of the population.

Paradise Shelduck/Pūtangitangi

January's aerial trend counts (reported in February 2023) showed a decrease in the Paradise shelduck population from 23,660 to 20,800 (figure 2). The long-term trend indicates a stable to increasing population. This is still in line with maintaining the long-term range of between 16,000 and 23,000 birds. Paradise Shelduck trend counts will be completed in January 2024, with the final bag limits confirmed against the population trend.

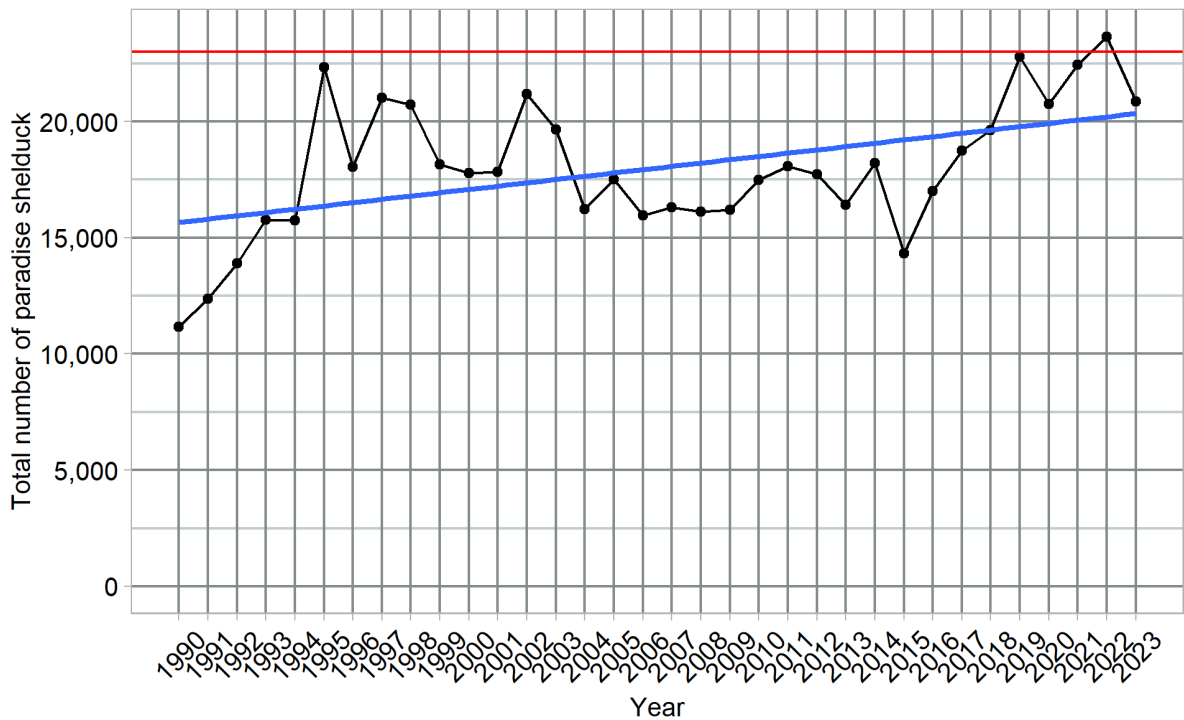


Figure 2. Long-term (1990-2023) trend count totals for paradise shelduck. Long-term linear trend shown in blue. The management threshold of 23,000 shelduck shown in red.

The 2023 paradise shelduck harvest was estimated at 17,370 which is well above last year's harvest and long-term trends (figure 3). If the summer moult trend count result exceeds 23,000, the 12 birds/day daily bag limit should be raised to 15 birds/day. In the event of a significantly lower moult count (under 16,000 birds), suspending the summer hunt for 2025 should be considered to reduce the harvest.

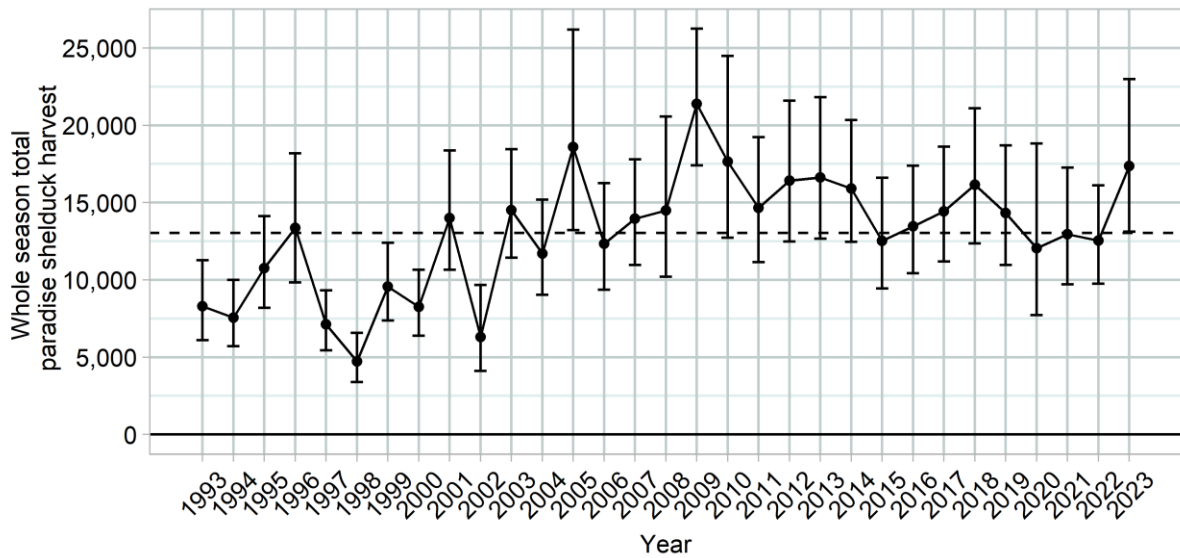


Figure 3. Whole season total paradise shelduck harvest for 1993-2023 with 95% confidence intervals and the average for the period (dotted line).

Black swan/Kakiānau

The aerial count in January 2023 showed a decrease from 3,573 birds in 2022 to 2,500 black swans in 2023. Monitoring data of Black swan shows an increasing population trend overtime.

An estimated 570 birds were harvested in 2023.

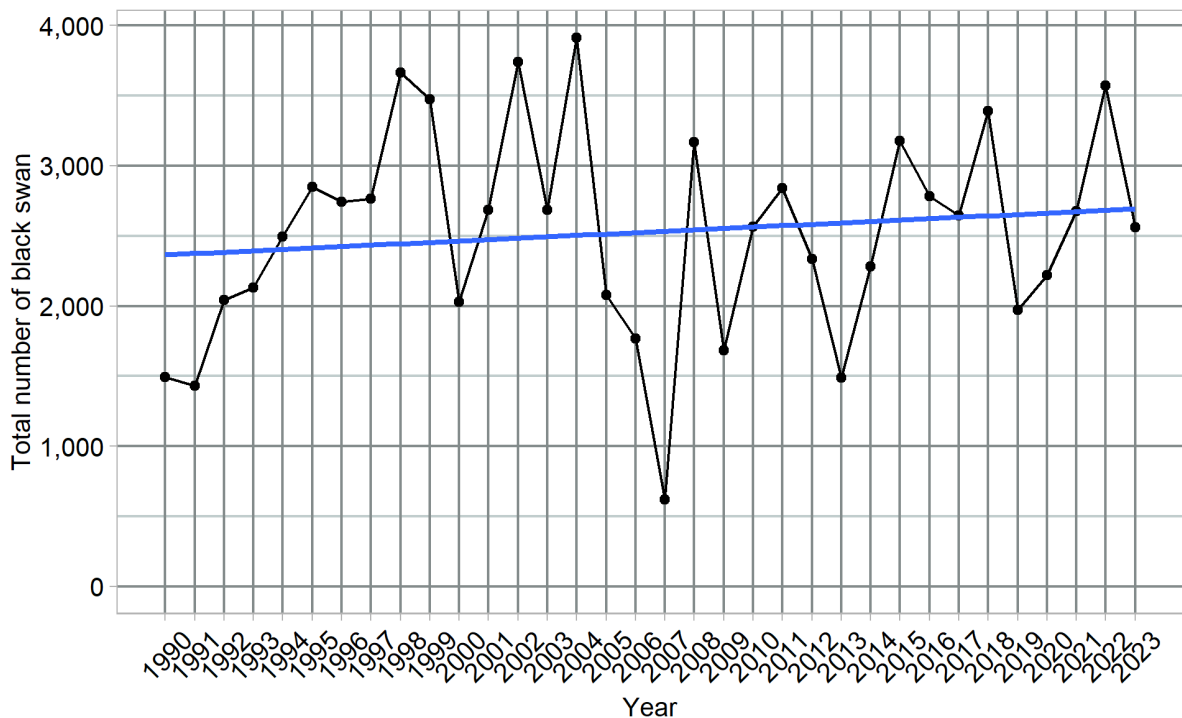


Figure 4. Long-term (1990-2023) count totals for black swan. Long-term linear trend shown in blue.

The bag limit was raised in 2022 to address crop and pasture damage in spring near areas where black swans congregate in high numbers, this does not appear to have had an impact on the number of black swans harvested since the bag limit was raised.

Pūkeko

Counts are undertaken annually to understand trends in the population and for setting game regulations. The population surveys for pūkeko have recently had 9 extra transects added to attempt to better understand the pūkeko dynamics in the region. There has only been two years of surveying the new transects and as such there is not enough data to indicate a stable and expanding population of pūkeko, therefore no change to the 2024 regulations is proposed for pūkeko.

Shoveler/Kuruwhengi

“The average number of shoveler counted per site in Otago for 2023 was just above the long-term average, suggesting relative stability. However, this does not account for changes in which sites were monitored over time. Trend analysis suggests a slight long-term decline in shoveler populations both in the Otago Region and nationally”.

There has been a noticeable downward trend in the total number of shoveler harvested in the Otago Region since 1993, a pattern that is consistent with other regions and the nationwide trend. However, this decline should not be interpreted as a definitive indication of a population decrease, as it is likely attributable to a combination of factors, especially changes in hunting practices. These include a shift away from traditional large coastal ponds and alterations in bag limits and season lengths over time. For instance, in 2008, the bag limit in Otago was reduced from five to two, which could have significantly impacted the harvest numbers, although this has not been tested.

The regulation change to the shoveler bag limit from two shoveler to one drake shoveler appears to have had the desired effect of reducing shoveler harvest in 2023 to its lowest level in the Otago and Southland regions, a trend not noted in the CSI or North Canterbury regions”.
Shoveler and Grey Teal Monitoring. J Couper. 2023

No change to the current one drake shoveler per day limit is proposed. Measures implemented in 2023 to reduce the shoveler harvest are recommended to be maintained for three to five years to monitor the effectiveness of the bag limit reduction at reducing shoveler harvest.

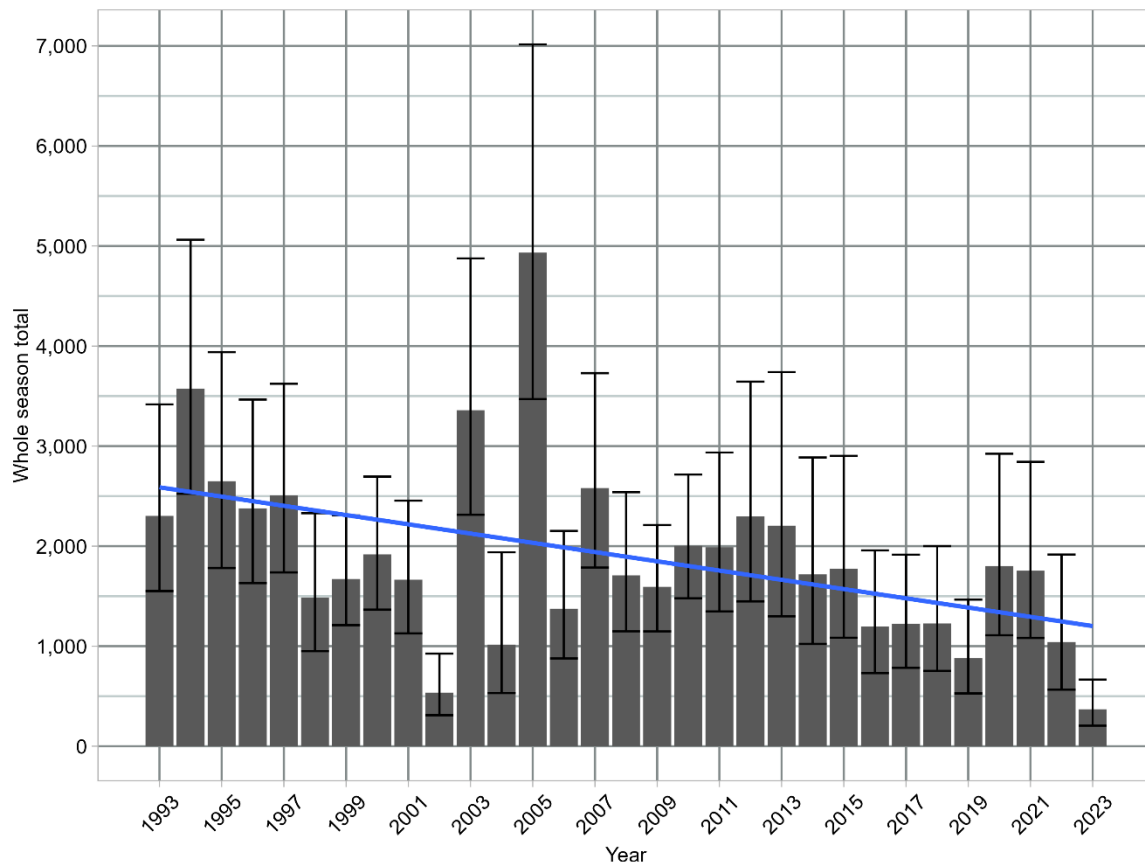


Figure 5. Whole season total shoveler harvest in the Otago Region. Long-term trend linear shown in blue.

Hunter Harvest

“The 2023 Otago game bird season was below average in most of the key metrics that we measure. The key reason for this was a reduction in the hours spent hunting on Opening Weekend. The significant outlier to this trend was the paradise shelduck harvest which increased this year to levels not seen since 2010.

Overall, there were a total of almost 64,500 gamebirds harvested this season, greylards (mallard, grey duck, and hybrids) made up almost 70 percent of harvest with paradise shelduck contributing over a quarter of the total number of birds harvested”. 231023 JC Whole Season Gamebird Harvest. J Couper. 2023.

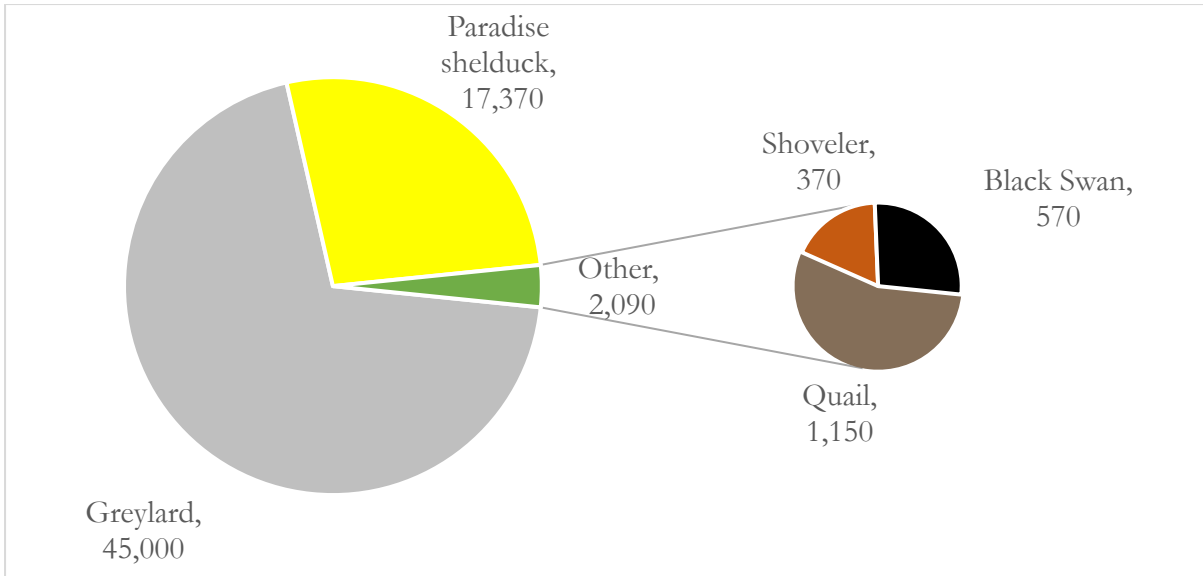


Figure 6: Whole season waterfowl harvest broken down by species in the Otago Region for 2023.



Figure 7: Total number of hours spent hunting in Otago on Opening Weekend and the whole season for 2014–2023 and the average number of Opening Weekend and whole season hours for the period (dashed lines).

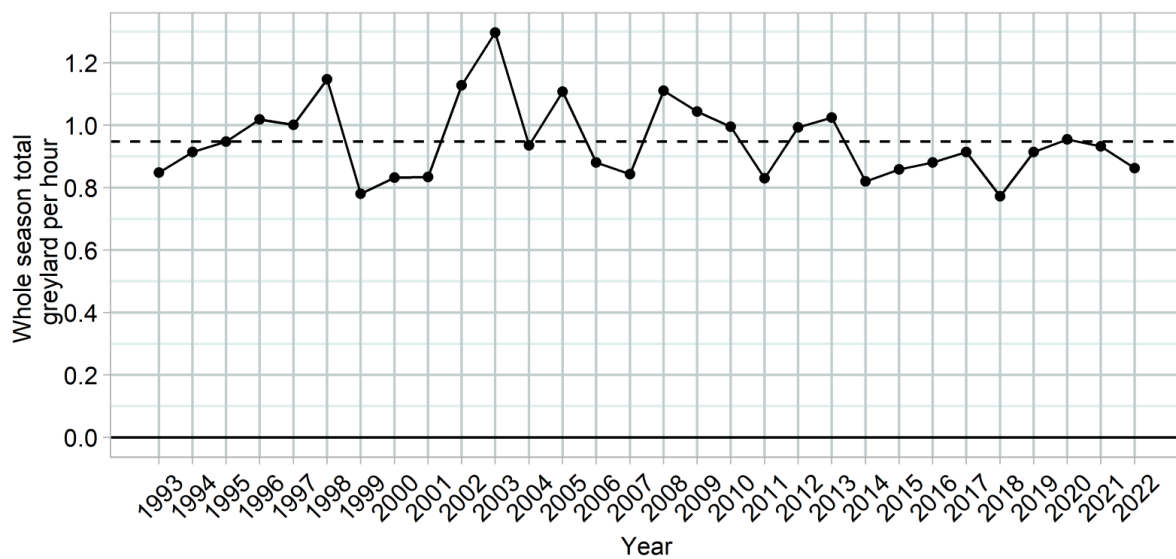


Figure 8. There has been a slight and statistically insignificant downward trend ($p=0.27$) over the survey period. The average harvest rate of grey/ards this season was 0.86 birds per hour, below the long-term mean at 0.95.

231023 JC Whole Season Gamebird Harvest. J Couper. 2023.

Ngāi Tahu ki Ōtākau

This draft report has been provided to Ngāi Tahu for comment. The timeframe between the drafting of the gazette notice and the November Council meeting is not long enough for consultation with Ngāi Tahu to be fully completed. While a reply maybe received at the Council meeting due to the time constraints involved around preparation of the gazette notice, a process needs to be developed with Ngāi Tahu to enable consultation to be undertaken in a more timely manner and completed prior to the Council November meeting.

Liaison with neighbouring Fish and Game Regions

We have communicated with both Central South Island and Southland staff over proposed regulation changes for their respective regions.

CSI are not considering any changes.

Southland imposed a daily bag limit on shoveler of two drakes/day for 2023/24 season. Staff are proposing to recommend a bag limit of one shoveler drake and are considering a bag limit reduction for grey/ards for 2024/25.

Further discussion is required at a national level to align measures for harvest reduction of shoveler.

Recommendations for the 2023 game bird hunting season:

- 1. *That the draft game regulations be adopted subject to Paradise shelduck trend counts and the population falling between 16,000 and 23,000 birds.***
- 2. *If the Paradise Shelduck trend count exceeds 23,000 birds that the daily bag limit for that species to be increased to 15/day region wide, if the count is less than 16,000 the summer season for paradise shelduck should be suspended for 2025.***
- 3. *That the closed game area status is removed from Ashley Downs, Clinton.***

A draft set of Game Regulations have been attached as Appendix 1.

David Priest
Operations Manager, Cromwell
November 2023

Appendix 1 – Draft Game Notice

OTAGO FISH AND GAME REGION

1 Game That May be Hunted or Killed—Duration of 2024/2025 Season

Species	Season Duration (Dates inclusive)	Daily Bag Limit	Hunting Area
Grey/mallard duck and any hybrid of those species	4 May to 28 Jul 2024	25	All areas
NZ shoveler duck	4 May to 28 Jul 2024	1 Drake only	All areas
Paradise shelduck	4 May to 25 Aug 2024	12	All areas
	1 Mar to 9 Mar 2025	5	All areas (refer to clause 5(4) for this Region)
Pūkeko	Closed season	0	All areas
Black swan	Closed season	0	Area A
	4 May to 25 Aug 2024	10	Area B
California quail	1 June to 25 Aug 2024	10	All areas
Chukar	1 June to 25 Aug 2024	2	All areas
Cock Pheasant	1 June to 25 Aug 2024	5	All areas

2 Definition of Areas

- (1) **Area A:** The Clutha River catchment upstream from the Clyde Dam.
- (2) **Area B:** The Clutha River catchment downstream from the Clyde Dam; the Taieri River catchment and all the coastal catchments between Shag Point and The Brothers Point on the east coast of the South Island.

3 Shooting Hours

- (1) **Area A:** 7.00am to 6.45pm
- (2) **Area B:** 7.00am to 6.30pm

4 Decoy Limit

No limit.

5 Special Conditions

- (1) No person shall use or cause to be used on any water within the region for the hunting or killing of game, any fixed stand, pontoon, hide, loo or maimai, except within a distance of 10 metres from the water margin in non-tidal waters, or from the low water mark in tidal waters, or from the outside edge of the raupo growth where raupo abounds, without the prior consent of the Otago Fish and Game Council.
- (2) No person may leave on the hunting ground the bodies or parts of bodies of Black swan or other game shot in the Otago Fish and Game region.
- (3) Shooting from a boat is prohibited on the Clutha River from 4 May to 12 May 2024 (refer to First Schedule clause 6).
- (4) The summer paradise shelduck season is open from 1 March to 9 March 2025. Hunting is restricted to locations 200 metres or more from open water.

6 Refuges and Closed Game Areas

The following wetland refuges and closed game areas are closed to hunting:

Refuges Location

- (1) Lake Hayes Queenstown/Arrowtown highway
- (2) Hawksbury Lagoon Waikouaiti– East Otago
- (3) Finegand Balclutha

Closed Game Areas Location

- (4) Tomahawk Lagoon Dunedin
- (5) Kawarau River outlet from Lake Wakatipu downstream to the Shotover River confluence

8.0 Public Excluded Items

8.1 Draft Minutes of Public Excluded Items from Otago Fish and Game Council Meeting 28th September 2023

8.2 Bullock Creek Stormwater Update

8.3 Cromwell Field Base Purchase – Verbal Update

9.0 Financial Report

Finance and Licence Sales 31st October 2023

9.1 Finance Reports

The financial Profit and Loss report and Balance sheet for the period from 1st September 2023 to 31st October 2023 are below.

Profit and Loss

Income

Licence Income

Total licence sales year to date is \$1,006,990 against annual budget of \$2,455,777 (41% of budget)

Fish licence revenue to 31stOctober 2023 totals \$1,006,973 (Fish sales \$996,615 + non resident revenue \$1,909 + Designated Water licence \$8,448) compared with \$975,008 for the same period of the 2022/23 season.

Fish Licence revenue is ahead of 2022/23 by \$31,965 and ahead of budget. These figures include both resident and non resident sales.

Other Income

Total other income year to date is \$13,960.

Areas of interest are:

- Rent Received is below budget as the budget was made when we had the Cromwell section leased out.

Donations and Grants (not in budget)

Donation/Grant from	For	Amount GST excl
Bayfield High School	TAKF Lures	\$50.00
Otago Community Trust	TAKF	\$1,879.00
Total		\$1,929.00

Expenses

Expenditure at the 31st October for the 2023/24 financial year is \$532,262 against a year to date budget of \$521,963. Expenditure is slightly over budget by \$13,299.

The main reasons for this variance are:

- Species Management - Hatchery Operations – Recent large fish food order delivered.
- Habitat Protection – this includes \$4,146 of unbudgeted Contact Sports Management Plan spending, this will be on charged on to Contact Energy Ltd, Works and Management spending on wetland plant guards and stakes and budgeted maintenance to the Wanaka grounds.
- Participation – Designated water surveys and monitoring is just beginning with a budget in place, OF&G fishing training events are mostly complete.
- Public interface. Active with fishing reports and social media.
- Compliance- one difficult prosecution included.
- Licencing – Commission is made up from agent sales and bank fees associated with online sales. Designated Waters (DW) IT Build – Otago Region contribution to designing and implementing the DWL system and data base
- Council expenses – One meeting accounted for.
- Planning and Reporting – Limited spending until the audit finishes.
- Over Heads/Administration – office premises - an assessment was done on building insurance and it is much higher than budget. General expenses – unexpected legal cost for Wanaka Hatchery/Bullock Creek.
- Approved Reserves Expenses - \$6,603 this is expenditure approved by the council for the Bendigo, Bullock Creek and Historical and Regional Policy Statement Reserves.
- Depreciation – Depreciation year to date is \$9,963
- Levies – as per budget. \$96,829.85 excl GST a month
- University Research Grant – Dr Donald Scott \$5000 has been paid from the non resident reserve as agreed by Council.

The profit and loss for the 2 months ended 31st October 2023 shows a surplus of \$488,687.

Balance Sheet

Bank Funds Position at 31st October 2023

Bank	Value
ANZ 00 Account	\$ 100,464.96
ANZ 70 Account	\$ 310,888.80
ASB Account	\$ 90.57
Cash On Hand	\$ 50.00
Total	\$411,494.33

Term Investments as at 31st October 2023

Investment Bank	Amount	Rate	Maturity
ANZ 1000	\$516,442.13	5.45%	13 th Nov 2023
ANZ 1001	Closed*		25 th Sept 2023
Total	\$516,442.13		

*ANZ 1001 was closed on the 25th Sept 2023 and added to the 70 Account \$401,016.99
ANZ 1000 was re invested 13th November at 6.0%

Fixed Assets Capital Expenditure

Total fixed assets \$1,391,778

Over the last two months:

- The replacement hull for the Dunedin based stabi-craft boat is due for delivery. Motors and sounder have been brought and installed by a separate supplier.
- A replacement Ford Ranger has been delivered. The older one will be listed for sale shortly.
- A quote has been accepted for new doors for the Window Treatments show room. \$4,972. Construction should start in February 2024.
- We have ordered (and now received) a potable defibrillator for the Dunedin office and outings.
- ARF (Asset Replacement Fund) will remain low until we sell a truck and boat.

Liabilities

Total Liabilities at 31st October are \$294,654.

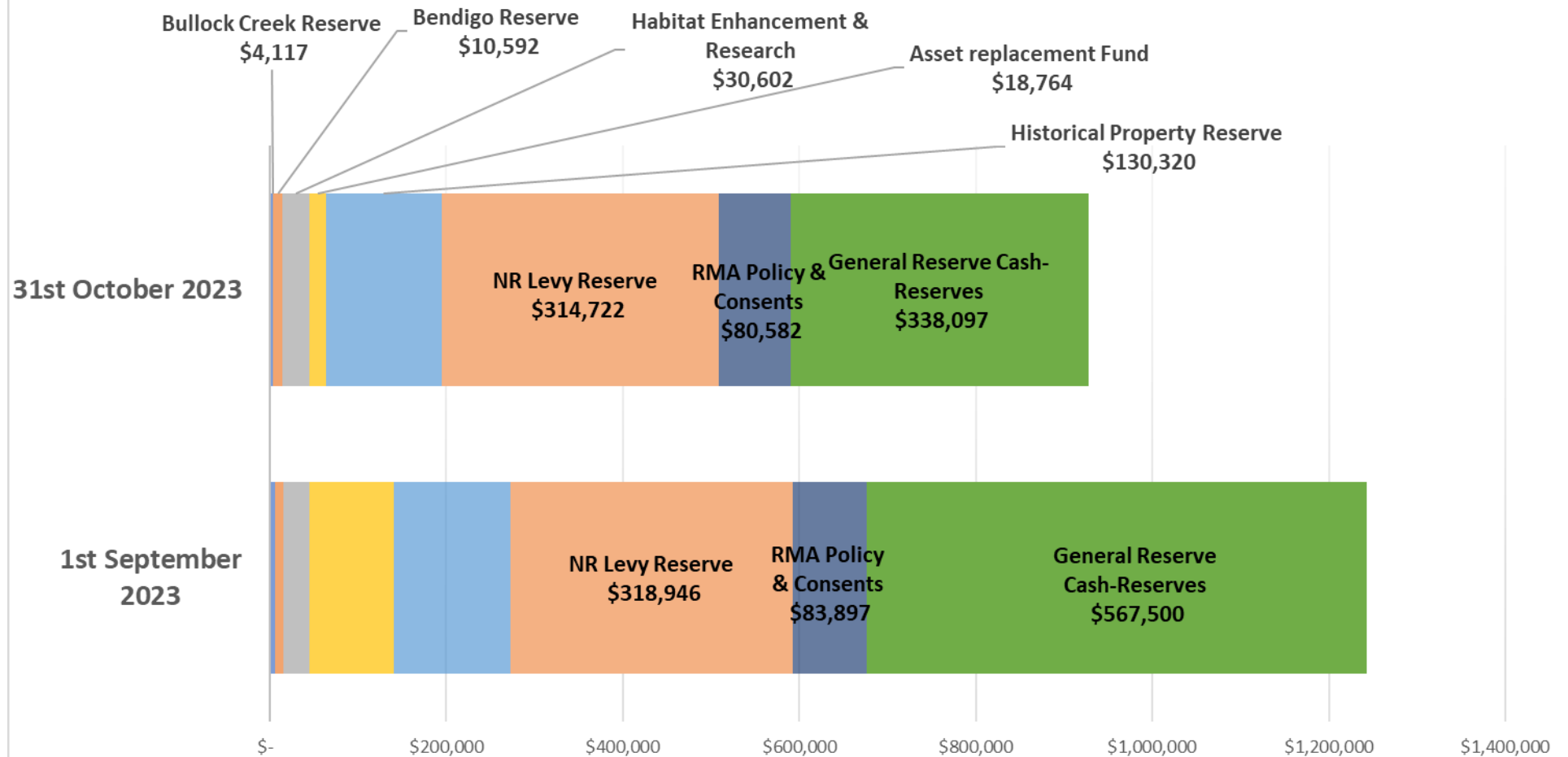
- Employee Entitlements includes \$55,836.08 of outstanding staff annual leave.
- Salmon Endorsement and Designated Waters Liabilities are money owed to other regions for licences relating to their region but sold in Otago

Equity**Otago Fish and Game Reserves 31st October 2023**

Otago Reserves Movements	Balance August 2023	Income (To) Reserve	Note	Outgoing (From) Reserve	Balance Feb 2023
Back Country Non-resident Levy	\$318,946	\$1,909	1	\$6,133	\$314,722
Habitat Enhancement & Research	\$29,502	\$1,100	2	\$0	\$30,602
Bullock Creek Reserve	\$5,437	\$0.0		\$1,320	\$4,117
Bendigo Reserve	\$10,592	\$0.0	8	\$0.0	\$10,592
Priority Consents Reserve	\$41,697	\$0.0	7	\$0.0	\$41,697
Historical Property Reserves	\$132,341	\$0.0	4	\$2,021	\$130,320
Regional Policy Statement Reserve	\$11,124	\$0.0	5	\$3,315	\$7,809
Priority Plan Changes	\$31,076	\$0.0	6	\$0.0	\$31,076
Total	\$580,715	\$3,009		\$12,789	\$570,935

- Note 1 \$5000 a year for five years is to be taken from the Non resident fund for the Dr Donald Scott University Fund. Agreed by Council May 2021. 2021/22 is year three. Budget for 2023/24 Implementation of the Designated Waters set up and monitoring.
- Note 2 Balance is \$30,602. Less committed but not yet paid out of \$5,000 so balance of \$25,602 available for dispersal by way of grants.
- Note 4 Historical Property Reserve, used on development of the Wanaka site
- Note 5 OF&GC agreed to \$60,000 May 2020. NZC notified.
- Note 6 OF&GC agreed to \$120,000 May 2020. NZC notified. \$81,000 agreed to be spent by council September 2020.
- Note 7 OF&GC agreed to \$60,000 May 2020. NZC notified.
- Note 8 May 2022 \$3,414 and March 2023 \$3,000 council agreed to Habitat Enhancement funds for Bendigo. CFT agreed to assist with grant of \$15,000 June 23. ORC Eco Fund \$5,000 June 23

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES FROM 1ST SEPTEMBER 2023 TO 31ST OCTOBER 2023



Balance Sheet

Otago Fish and Game Council As at 31 October 2023

	31 OCT 2023	31 AUG 2023
Assets		
Current Assets		
Bank	411,494	324,402
Receivables		
Accounts Receivable	896,110	159,885
Prepayments and Accrued Income	3,699	12,332
Total Receivables	899,809	172,216
GST	(77,447)	22,038
Investments	516,376	916,442
Inventory	15,599	15,599
Accrued Interest	8,328	17,017
Total Current Assets	1,774,160	1,467,714
Fixed Assets		
Property Plant & Equipment	1,391,778	1,329,054
Total Fixed Assets	1,391,778	1,329,054
Total Assets	3,165,939	2,796,768
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	61,307	77,178
Other Payables	172,110	263,012
Employee Entitlements	57,915	73,980
Rounding	-	-
Salmon Endorsement	1,570	-
Designated Waters other regions	1,752	-
Total Current Liabilities	294,654	414,170
Total Liabilities	294,654	414,170
Net Assets	2,871,285	2,382,598
Equity		
Accumulated Funds		
Accumulated Funds	1,538,204	1,622,094
Current Year Earnings	488,687	(83,890)
Transfer (To)/From Reserves	254,694	172,027
Total Accumulated Funds	2,281,585	1,710,231
Dedicated Reserves		
Non Resident Levy Reserve	314,722	318,946
Habitat Enhancement & Research	30,602	29,502
Priority Plan Changes Reserve	31,076	31,076
Priority Consents Reserve	41,697	41,697

	31 OCT 2023	31 AUG 2023
Regional Policy Statement Reserve	7,809	11,124
Mining Privileges Reserve	-	-
Historical Property Reserve	130,320	132,341
Renovation Reserve	-	-
Asset Replacement Funding	18,764	91,651
Total Dedicated Reserves	574,990	656,337
Restricted Reserves		
Bullock Creek Reserve	4,117	5,437
Bendigo Reserve	10,592	10,592
Total Restricted Reserves	14,710	16,030
Total Equity	2,871,285	2,382,598

Profit and Loss

Otago Fish and Game Council For the 2 months ended 31 October 2023

	SEP 2023	OCT 2023	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
Income								
Licence Sales								
Fish Licence Sales	479,151	517,464	996,615	754,787	241,828	132%	2,077,401	1,878,550
Non-Resident Licence Revenue	1,909	-	1,909	-	1,909	-	-	105,135
Designated Water Licence Sales	3,774	4,674	8,448	-	8,448	-	-	-
Game Licence Sales	-	17	17	-	17	-	378,376	354,010
Total Licence Sales	484,834	522,156	1,006,990	754,787	252,203	133%	2,455,777	2,337,695
Other Income								
Wages Reimbursement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14,941
Contact Energy Mitigation Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	68,972
Interest Income	2,025	1,294	3,319	9,458	(6,139)	35%	56,757	52,630
Fines - Fishing & Game Offences	293	205	497	-	497	-	500	798
Rent Received	5,661	1,419	7,080	10,640	(3,560)	67%	63,849	53,747
Fishing Competitions	35	-	35	-	35	-	-	1,544
Profit on Sale of Fixed Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,144
Donations & Grants	1,879	50	1,929	-	1,929	-	-	28,823
Merchandise Sales/Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	87
RMA Costs Reimbursed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60,000
Sundry Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	413
Diversion - Habitat Enhancement and Research Fund	1,100	-	1,100	-	1,100	-	-	18,460
Total Other Income	10,993	2,967	13,960	20,098	(6,138)	69%	121,106	308,559
Total Income	495,827	525,123	1,020,949	774,885	246,064	132%	2,576,883	2,646,254

	SEP 2023	OCT 2023	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
Gross Profit	495,827	525,123	1,020,949	774,885	246,064	132%	2,576,883	2,646,254
Expenses								
Species Management								
Population Monitoring	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,000	49,063
Monitor key fisheries/Research Liaison	-	-	-	200	(200)	-	1,000	-
Harvest Assessment	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,500	3,500
Hatchery Operations	3,071	-	3,071	3,000	71	102%	9,000	14,731
Releases	71	105	176	600	(424)	29%	1,000	625
Game Bird Control compliants	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	444
Total Species Management	3,142	105	3,247	3,800	(553)	85%	27,500	68,363
Habitat Protection & Mngt								
Contact Sports Fish Management Plan	2,498	1,648	4,146	-	4,146	-	-	44,017
Resource Mngt Act	-	-	-	200	(200)	-	1,000	64,042
Works & Management	728	2,510	3,238	4,000	(762)	81%	12,500	1,574
Habitat Enhancement Research Fund Grants	-	1,739	1,739	-	1,739	-	-	2,870
Total Habitat Protection & Mngt	3,225	5,897	9,123	4,200	4,923	217%	13,500	112,503
Participation								
Access and Signage	-	78	78	420	(342)	19%	2,500	2,499
Back Country Surveys/Monitoring	233	900	1,133	1,000	133	113%	25,000	116
Promotion Articles and Advertising	-	-	-	200	(200)	-	500	-
Publications and Web Site	-	924	924	-	924	-	-	4,430
OF&G Training Events	1,441	70	1,511	1,750	(239)	86%	2,000	2,300
Club Relations and Grants	-	-	-	500	(500)	-	1,000	1,083
F&G Advocacy at Popular Fisheries	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,026
Total Participation	1,673	1,972	3,645	3,870	(225)	94%	31,000	25,453

	SEP 2023	OCT 2023	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
PUBLIC INTERFACE								
Liaison								
Liaison DoC Unin Govt CFT IWI	-	-	-	200	(200)	-	1,000	765
Total Liaison	-	-	-	200	(200)	-	1,000	765
Communication								
World Wetlands	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	54
Total Communication	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	54
Media Releases								
Advocacy Statutory	-	-	-	100	(100)	-	500	-
Weekly Fishing Reports/ social media	507	560	1,067	1,128	(61)	95%	4,500	2,940
Communications Strategy	-	140	140	4,000	(3,860)	4%	24,000	14,520
Media Release	-	-	-	100	(100)	-	500	400
Total Media Releases	507	700	1,207	5,328	(4,121)	23%	29,500	17,860
Total PUBLIC INTERFACE	507	700	1,207	5,528	(4,321)	22%	31,000	18,679
COMPLIANCE								
Ranger Training and Expenses	322	1,667	1,989	300	1,689	663%	5,500	5,941
Compliance	3,854	4,396	8,250	-	8,250	-	5,000	6,649
Total COMPLIANCE	4,176	6,062	10,239	300	9,939	3,413%	10,500	12,590
LICENCING								
Designated Waters IT Build	10,512	10,512	21,023	31,819	(10,796)	66%	31,819	-
Agent Servicing	-	79	79	250	(171)	32%	500	172
Commission/Fees	16,126	19,025	35,151	33,965	1,186	103%	110,510	86,914
Total LICENCING	26,638	29,616	56,253	66,034	(9,781)	85%	142,829	87,087
COUNCIL								
Elections Council	-	-	-	-	-	-	250	-

	SEP 2023	OCT 2023	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
Council Meetings and Agendas	1,362	454	1,816	2,500	(684)	73%	15,000	12,462
Total COUNCIL	1,362	454	1,816	2,500	(684)	73%	15,250	12,462
PLANNING & REPORTING								
Reporting/Audit	-	3,798	3,798	16,000	(12,202)	24%	16,000	17,049
National Liason	52	-	52	300	(248)	17%	500	630
Total PLANNING & REPORTING	52	3,798	3,850	16,300	(12,450)	24%	16,500	17,679
ADMINISTRATION								
Salaries	46,833	109,602	156,435	164,504	(8,069)	95%	987,058	808,170
Staff Expenses								
ACC Levy	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,000	2,160
Fringe Benefit Tax	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,500	7,217
Staff Training	1,610	-	1,610	1,000	610	161%	6,000	16,619
Staff Clothing Branded	-	452	452	-	452	-	-	572
Staff Personal Expenses	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Staff Expenses	634	231	865	1,340	(475)	65%	8,000	9,438
Staff Employment Expenses	-	-	-	400	(400)	-	2,000	683
Total Staff Expenses	2,244	684	2,928	2,740	188	107%	24,500	36,689
Office Premices	24,444	15,918	40,362	27,249	13,113	148%	115,899	114,681
Office Equipment	31	15	46	450	(404)	10%	2,500	1,119
Communications	2,140	1,516	3,656	3,488	168	105%	20,700	23,017
General Exp (incl Insurance)	5,457	2,797	8,255	2,140	6,115	386%	4,600	2,720
General Field Equipment	148	-	148	632	(484)	23%	3,300	2,572
Vehicles	10,546	5,280	15,826	15,664	162	101%	54,000	60,078
Total ADMINISTRATION	91,845	135,812	227,657	216,867	10,790	105%	1,212,557	1,049,047
Approved Reserve Expense	2,043	4,559	6,603	-	6,603	-	-	61,697
Depreciation	4,506	5,458	9,963	8,906	1,057	112%	53,431	59,502

	SEP 2023	OCT 2023	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	VARIANCE	% OF YTD BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	LAST YEAR
NZ Fish & Game Levies	96,830	96,830	193,660	193,658	2	100%	1,161,958	1,200,082
University of Otago Research Grant	-	5,000	5,000	-	5,000	-	-	5,000
Total Expenses	236,000	296,262	532,262	521,963	10,299	102%	2,716,025	2,730,144
Net Profit	259,826	228,861	488,687	252,922	235,765	193%	(139,142)	(83,890)

9.2 Licence Sales

Fish Licence Sales 2021/22 and 2022/23 Complete Season Comparison

See Appendix 1 for a table showing fish licence sales for each licence type. This table shows fish licences sales for the complete seasons 2021/22 and 2022/23.

In summary, fishing licence sales in whole season licence equivalents (LEQs) 14,947.47 LEQs compared with 14,823.20 LEQs for the same period of the previous year - 124.27 LEQs ahead. Adult and family resident licence volumes are down. All Non resident categories and day licence numbers are up, due to increased international and local tourism.

Fish Licence Sales 2023/24 Season to 15th November 2023

See table following for fish licence sales numbers and categories for the start of the 2023/24 season sales. All prices have increased - Whole season adults from \$145 to \$153, Family from \$188 to \$198 and non resident full season from \$250 to \$264.

Our previous Back Country Waters are now Designated Waters. Designated Waters are charged out at \$5 per region for the season for residents and \$40 a day for Non Residents (with a limit of 5 per region)

Note that DWLR relates to resident designated water licences sold in Otago and some are for other regions. We will not know what sales other regions have for Otago until the end of the season.

See appendix 2 for a table showing fish licence sales for each licence type. This table shows fish licence sales for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 seasons to the 15th of November of the season.

In summary, 2023/24 fishing licence sales in whole season licence equivalents (LEQs) 8,378.37 LEQs compared with 8,738.89 LEQs for the same period last year. 360.52 LEQs behind last year at the same time. The designated water resident licence is of small value so does not effect the LEQ greatly, it is more influenced by the Adult and family resident licence sales that are down this year. Non resident categories are up due to increased international and local tourism but not enough to extend the LEQ calculations.

9.3 Agents Debts - Nil

9.4 Recommendations

1. ***That the Finance Report be received.***
2. ***That the Licence Sales Report be received.***

Sharon Milne
Administration Officer
17/11/2023

Full Season Comparison of Fish Licence Sales for 2021/22 and 2022/23

2022/23																		
Sales	FWFA	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FWIA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWNC	FDNC	Total	Fish LEQ
Public	2115	2365	544	363	401	245	37	409	2920	2215	546	48	417	105	17	56	14649	7,550.7
Agency	2193	3062	208	698	156	145	20	163	777	1212	395	30	97	96	11	25	9929	7,396.77
Total	4308	5427	752	1061	557	390	57	572	3697	3427	941	78	514	201	28	81	24578	14,947.47

2021/22																		
Sales	FWFA	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FWIA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWNC	FDNC	Total	Fish LEQ
Public	2136	2582	96	311	419	233	27	452	2747	287	467	16	295	24	7	16	11527	6,967.07
Agency	2415	3494	17	749	171	151	11	245	817	213	410	3	78	15	0	16	8831	7,856.13
Total	4551	6076	113	1060	590	384	38	697	3564	500	877	19	373	39	7	32	20358	14,823.2

FWFA (Family), FWA (Adult), FWNA (Non Resident), FSLA (Senior Loyal), FLAA (Local Area),

FWIA (Winter), FLBA (long Break), FSBA (Short Break), FDA (Adult Day), FDNA (Non Resident Adult Day)

FWJ (Junior), FWNJ (Junior non resident), FDJ (Junior Day), FDNJ (Non Resident Junior Day), FWNC (non Resident Child)

FDNC (Non Resident child Day)

Fish Licence Sales 2022/23 and 2023/24 To the 15th November of the Season

2023/24

Sales	FWFA	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWNC	FDNC	SRSE	DWLR	DWLN	Total	Fish LEQ
Public	1071	1287	159	306	124	3	69	401	242	224	4	47	10	3	4	0	1061	84	5687	3,505.78
Agency	1545	2076	48	653	73	0	28	103	122	209	0	11	12	0	8	412	1180	5	6491	4,872.59
Total	2616	3363	207	959	197	3	97	504	364	433	4	58	22	3	12	412	2241	89	12178	8,378.37

2022/23

Sales	FWFA	FWA	FWNA	FSLA	FLAA	FLBA	FSBA	FDA	FDNA	FWJ	FWNJ	FDJ	FDNJ	FWNC	FDNC	SRSE	DWLR	DWLN	Total	Fish LEQ
Public	1287	1405	149	307	162	7	51	435	170	231	3	59	9	1	5	0	0	0	4887	3,780.96
Agency	1619	2107	32	638	95	2	37	139	118	230	3	12	5	0	1	474	0	0	5514	4,957.93
Total	2906	3512	181	945	257	9	88	574	288	461	6	71	14	1	6	474	0	0	10401	8,738.89

FWFA (Family), FWA (Adult season), FWNA (Non Resident season), FSLA (Senior Loyal), FLAA (Local Area),

FLBA (long Break), FSBA (Short Break), FDA (Adult Day), FDNA (Non Resident Adult Day), FWJ (Junior Season)

FWNJ (Junior non resident season), FDJ (Junior Day), FDNJ (Non Resident Junior Day), FWNC (non Resident Child season)

FDNC (Non Resident child Day), SRSE (Salmon Endorsement), DWLR (Designated Waters Resident), DWLN (Designated Waters Non Resident)

10.0 Chief Executives Report – November 2023

10.1 SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Gamebird harvest and monitoring reports

Two interesting reports on gamebird harvest and monitoring are appended to this agenda. They are there to support decision making for the new seasons gamebird regulations. Item 14.2 and 14.3.

Monitor Fisheries

Staff have been working on ground truthing a model of spawning in Otago. The GIS mapping has revealed a number of potential sites where spawning could occur but we have no up to date records. Those sites are progressively being electric fished to record if juvenile trout are present and, if in high densities, return visits will be made to inspect for spawning areas.

Regulations

The Gamebird Gazette Notice is to be considered this meeting and as usual will be subject to Paradise shelduck trend count results analysed at the end of January. See report item 7.1.

Species interaction

Our ecologist and Cr Highton attended the opening of a galaxiid sanctuary in the Kyeburn last week. The Kyeburn is a catchment which should have a fisheries management plan to identify and map species because there are valuable populations of both sportfish and galaxiids present. A permit has also been renewed for the Otago Regional Council to continue their galaxiid protection work in the catchment including trout removals/translocation.

10.2 HABITAT PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Contact Energy – Lower Clutha Sportfish Management Plan Implementation

The operational work programme for the 2023/24 Contact Energy funded sportfish and habitat work in the Clutha River has been agreed and is underway. One large component this summer is a Lower Clutha sportfish harvest survey which will be conducted by telephone.

The recent endorsement of the Contact Energy board for the funding agreement for the Mata Au Sports Fish Trust means the only remaining signature required on the Trust documents now is that of Contact Energy itself. With everything now approved, that should happen quickly.

CE to Update

Bullock Creek Wetland QEII covenant celebration

A joint effort between Friends of Bullock Creek and F&G culminated in an excellent celebration of the QEII Covenant. Around 70 people turned up to hear addresses from FOBC, F&G, QEII Trust and Corrections representatives. Thanks to those Councillors who were able to attend at short notice and show their support.



Takitakitoa Wetland planting

Several planting days and a huge effort from Te Nukuroa o Matamata have seen around 3000 native plants added to our extensive plantings at Takitakitoa Wetland. The surrounding area has recently been logged so the wetland plantings are particularly visible.



10.3 USER PARTICIPATION

Designated Waters implementation

The Designated Waters licencing system is running relatively smoothly. Some issues with the payment gateway and the way it interacts with foreign credit cards are being resolved. Monitoring and compliance is underway with 38 surveys having already been completed and only one minor compliance issue detected.

Publications

The future of the F&G magazine is still being considered with most regions and staff considering that the publication is still required in its printed form. Rising printing and distribution costs are becoming a significant concern. The NZC have assured us they will consult regions on any changes.

Take a Kid Fishing and Adult Fishing Classes

Most events will be complete by the time of the meeting. Attached is a report on the events, including feedback from users which is very positive. See item 14.1.

Angler access mapping system online

Digitising and promotion of a new user interface for mapping of angler access is complete. The mapping system is hosted within the Otago pages of the website and has become a popular resource. <https://fishandgame.org.nz/otago/freshwater-fishing-in-new-zealand/>

10.4 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Advocacy

In addition to our local advocacy efforts, the Communications officer and I attended the launch of the NZ Council *ReWild* campaign earlier this month.

<https://rewild.fishandgame.org.nz/> The campaign profile has been high and couldn't be more timely in terms of cementing the organisation as a valuable statutory agency in the eyes of the new government, and the general public. Cr May also attended.



Meeting attendance

Staff have been attending plenty of stakeholder meetings including catchment groups in South Otago and at angling clubs. The CE spoke at the Otago Deerstalkers Association meeting to provide an update on the Fish & Game matters.

10.5 COMPLIANCE

Prosecutions

One protracted court prosecution was completed during the reporting period. An angler who gave false particulars was fined a total of \$1,250. Diversion of offenders is still the most cost effective option for dealing with non compliance and a number of early season offences have already been resolved via that method.

10.6 LICENCING

The system seems to be running without issues and a good number of designated waters licences have been sold. Licence sales are down across the country but only marginally behind in Otago. (see finance report)

10.7 COUNCIL

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Southland F&G

Both Southland and Otago chairs have now signed the MOU. Staff will continue to liaise on operational matters. The CE will be attending Southlands AGM as a show of support for the MOU.

Governance Training – Westlake

Otago Fish and Game Council Meeting 30th November 2023

A summary from NZC shows that most of our Council has completed some governance training which is excellent.

Boat Replacement

The Dunedin Stabicraft replacement (Frewza F16) is ready for collection and will be put to work as soon as it has completed its maritime survey. The Stabicraft will be put on the market then to ensure there is a smooth changeover.



10.8 PLANNING AND REPORTING

Annual Audit and Annual Report

Attached is the statement of service performance which was sent to the Auditor. As mentioned, it doubles as a communication piece for licence holders so it has morphed into a more newsletter style. At the point of writing the new format, which meets the updated accounting standard, seems to have met with the auditors approval.

The financial accounts are unfortunately still in the process of being audited. They will now have to be circulated as soon as signed off by BDO. The annual report is supposed to be adopted at the Council meeting and hopefully that will still be possible.

Next Council Meeting

Just a reminder that the next Council meeting is in Wanaka 10th & 11th February. This will be the Councils planning meeting for next years workplan. With the strategic direction being set, this shouldn't be a major exercise.

Recommendation

That this report be received

Ian Hadland

Chief Executive

November 2023

Reporting against 3 year strategic priorities 2023-2026

Goals	Activity this period
<p>Species & Habitat maintained and improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understand climate change impacts on critical habitat and species abundance and distribution. Long-term monitoring programmes are established for sensitive sportsfish and gamebird species/populations RMA/NBEA planning documents recognise fish and game bird values and protect and restore the habitats that they depend upon. 	<p>NZC is considering a two proposal on climate change impacts through the research fund.</p> <p>Focus presently on southern lakes sports fishery. Salmon spawning report in this agenda. Angler surveys at Lake Hawea continue. May need further guidance on which populations Council regard as sensitive.</p> <p>Hearings for Regional policy statement completed during reporting period. Land and Water Plan draft submission sent to Otago Regional Council.</p>
<p>Strategic relationships and advocacy enhanced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public and stakeholder perceptions (social licence) of Otago Fish & Game as a valid and respected organisation are improved. Alliances are formed with like-minded bodies for mutual benefit. (eg Industry groups, Game Animal Council) Landowners see F&G Otago as a valuable partner organisation in habitat protection, species management, and in fostering access to those resources. General public understand and value trout, salmon and game birds as public resource, and how angling and gamebird hunting contributes to community wellbeing, heritage and kiwi way of life. 	<p>Online, print and social media content continues to be released by staff.</p> <p>NZC ReWild campaign launch was an opportunity to meet Chair and staff of Game Animal Council. CE spoke at Otago Deerstalkers Assn.</p> <p>Staff (and Cr Highton) attended the Kyeburn Galaxiid protection sanctuary opening and south Otago catchment group meetings.</p> <p>Recent media coverage in support of the NZC ReWild campaign has been well received. Two Otago staff and Cr May attended the launch. Local promotion of ReWild campaign (which is well aligned) will continue.</p>
<p>Recruitment and retention of licence holders improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge of Otago F&G role and activity by licence holders results in improved perceptions of value for money in a licence. Barriers to participation such as cost, regulation complexity, skill level and access are managed or reduced as far as possible. 	<p>Repeat survey to licence holders emailed 17th Nov. Results will be reported to Feb Planning meeting.</p> <p>Regulation review, particularly the first schedule is becoming urgent. Two recent surveys have found regulation complexity a barrier to participation. No action to date but NZC have this matter on their agenda.</p> <p>Weekly river reports are being direct emailed to ~13,000 subscribers with a 49%</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licence holders see tangible 'evidence of service' through regular communication from the organisation. 	<p>open rate which is very good for online material.</p>
<p>Tangata Whenua/Mana whenua engaged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iwi and Otago F&G aspirations agreed and shared to achieve greater protection of freshwater and wetland values through RMA/NBEA processes. Enduring and meaningful partnership formed with tangata whenua. Conservation Act Section 4 responsibilities (treaty responsibilities) are understood, acknowledged and met. 	<p>Environmental officer continues to foster the working relationship with Aukaha through regular meetings and contact.</p> <p>Gamebird Notice information sent to Papatipu Runanga but no response to date. Will need to engage at a personal level without the urgency.</p> <p>NZC has recently received further guidance on F&G responsibilities and information on implementation of its responsibilities.</p>

11.0 RMA Planning and Consents Report

18 September – 22 November 2023

Current Legislation, Policy and Planning Processes

Proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement (PORPS)

Both hearings for the PORPS – the non-freshwater and the freshwater – have been closed. Staff are waiting on a decision from the commissioners.

Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP)

The Regional Council has released more detail on the direction of the LWRP. On initial review, it seems positive for environmental protection and restoration generally but does not do a good job at providing for angling and hunting values, nor enabling anglers and hunters to contribute to environmental protection and restoration through advocacy using their values. Staff understand that there will be a framework for proactively managing species interaction, similar to what is sought by Fish and Game in the PORPS. However, the details of this are not yet clear.

Since the last Council meeting, staff have provided feedback to the ORC on its proposed direction.

Current Notification processes

Applicant	Activity	Outcome
Otago Regional Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council and Central Otago District Council applications		
Peter Hall	To undertake suction dredge gold mining and to disturb the bed of the Clutha River/Mata Au	Fish and Game has submitted in opposition, citing concerns around spawning protections, disturbance to anglers and the mobilisation of sedimentation. Staff have liaised with the applicant and some to agreements on amendments which will significantly reduce areas of disagreement. A hearing was recently held and a decision is expected soon.

Written approval provided during the period

Applicant	Activity	Outcome
Otago Regional Council applications		
Gibbston Valley Station	To construct a water intake structure within the wetted bed of the Kawarau River in order to provide water for the new Gibbston Valley Resort infrastructure and development.	Staff provided advice on suitable fish screens and timing of works for the applicant that were adopted into later adaptations of the consent application. Written party approval was provided after these changes were adopted.
Queenstown Lakes District Council applications		
Aotearoa Anglers	To establish and maintain a fly fishing operation utilising inflatable rafts to drift fish on a variety of water bodies within the Queenstown Lakes region	Staff negotiated conditions with the applicants to mitigate the impact on anglers. Following a discussion with the Council and the applicants these conditions were adopted, written party approval was provided. It was noted to the applicants that providing affected party approval does not rule out future angling regulation changes for the activity in sensitive locations.

No written approvals were provided during the period for consents from the following bodies:

- Central Otago District Council
- Dunedin City Council
- Clutha District Council
- Waitaki District Council

Recommendation:

That this report be received.

**Nigel Paragreen
Environmental Officer
22 November 2023**

12.0 Committee & Delegate Reports

12.1 CFT

12.2 NZC

12.3 Ngai Tahu

12.4 Conservation Board

13.0 Correspondence

13.1 NZC to Otago

Nil

13.2 Otago to NZC

13.2.1 Feed Back on NZC Policy Bundle



29 September 2023

Chair, Barrie Barnes
New Zealand Fish & Game Council
Via email

Re: New Zealand F&G Council (NZC) Policy Feedback

Dear Barrie

The NZC bundle of policy documents and information was presented and considered at our recent Otago F&G Council meeting. Otago Council would like to offer the following feedback.

Draft National Policy on Setting National Policy

Council agreed that this formalises the present process for consultation and simply adds a timeframe for policy review. It thought it could be renamed *NZC Consultation Policy* as it primarily sets out the formal route for consultation of items with regions rather than policy development per se.

By way of further feedback;

- 3.2 created concern in that it seems to suggest the NZC would proceed with policy without substantial buy in by Regions. The word “consensus” was noticeably absent. That may comply strictly with the statute, but it would quickly erode the positive working relationship between Regional Councils and NZC.
- Policy on national policy setting should also contain other provisions such as reasons why any new or reviewed Policy is absolutely necessary, confirm it does not duplicate or overlap with other policy elsewhere, and if it supports - rather than usurps - statutory functions of Regional Councils.
- A maximum length of two pages for any policy was also suggested.

Meeting and Budget Schedule

Council was perplexed as to why this largely operational material was being circulated for consultation. It was welcomed as helpful information for this Councils own planning but councilors thought any potential clashes could be solved at regional managers meetings. It found no issues with the NZC schedule.

Draft Conflict of Interest Policy

Again, Council was unsure why NZC policy which only relates to the conduct of NZC is being circulated for consultation with Regions. In saying that, the Policy seems sound and modern, if a little verbose.

Only substantial comment was that paragraph 2c could be modified so that there is clarity around the potential conflict arising from being appointed to the role from a Regional F&G Council.

We note that NZC is encouraging (once ratified) Regions to adopt this as their own version. Otago Region has Conflict of Interest guidance in its Governance policy manual and Standing Orders so doesn't believe a further stand alone policy is required. It will however review these against the NZC version and seek to align where possible. Otago reviews its Governance policies regularly and believes that the present Governance Policy document (duplicated around Regions after being provided by NZC) helpfully encapsulates all the relevant policy in one place.

Terms of reference – Future Structure Working Group

Council noted that this group has been running for some time but there had been little by way of minutes to see if any substantial progress is being made.

Terms of reference – Future Finance Working Group

Council felt that the groups purpose seemed to cut across Regional Council statutory functions in setting up a 5 year business plan for the entire organisation. There is a contradiction between that point (2) and point 12 which recognises the legislative autonomy of regional Councils. Otago has its own 3 year strategic plan and works through a budget process to fund that. Council questioned how the two might be integrated in the future.

Cost Optimisation Project

Council also briefly discussed the Cost Optimisation Project (recognizing its links to the above subcommittee) and considered that the brief of work circulated for that project appears to be very broad and unfocused. The cost was also queried.

The Council seeks further refinement and clarity on aspects of the project before it participates more fully. The Council appreciates that costs and revenue should be regularly scrutinised and would welcome the opportunity contribute to the Future Finance Working Group in narrowing the projects scope, better defining the problem(s) to be solved and developing a clearer set of objectives for the project.

Yours sincerely



Colin Weatherall

Chair, Otago Fish & Game Council

13.3 General Correspondence In

13.3.1 Potential Negative Impacts on Fish and Game on the Taieri

From: Samuel Young <samuelyoung4@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 8:17 PM

To: NZ Fish & Game Council <nzcouncil@fishandgame.org.nz>

Subject: Potential negative impacts on fish and game on the Taieri

To Whom it may concern ,

My name is Sam Young and I have lived on the Taieri river for my entire life hunting waterfowl on the lower Taieri between Outram and Allanton as well as trout fishing. We have been approached by a cycle trail group about having a concrete bicycle trail put on the paper road on the edge of the Taieri river as well as a potential bridge crossing the Taieri river at Lindsay road. We believe this will mean an end to being able to hunt waterfowl on this stretch of water if the trail is to go ahead. Concern was voiced at a meeting in Outram about this matter but I personally believe the gentleman who voiced this was not listened to by the cycle trail committee. He was not the only one to have this view but the only one who spoke up. I am seriously concerned of the potential risk to habitat as well as to the structure of the rivers berm and the integrity of the Taieri river's flood bank if this trail goes ahead. I am a farmer and an outdoorsman who enjoys peace and quiet while hunting and fishing and believe if we are to have a trail put through here it will greatly reduce mine and many other locals experiences or stop us going on the Taieri at all. I have been a licence holder every year since I can remember dad taking me out and will be again this season but I have serious concerns about a cycle trail polluting our local waterway. Litter, and the cycle trail committee not including toilets present along the trail in their proposed plan, seems crazy and sounds like a potential hazard to our waterway, especially if they are to put portaloos in which was a potential solution by this group. Contamination is likely at the first flood if this is given the go ahead and I believe it will make for a difficult situation for Fish and Game too. I hope you could get in touch with me around this potential issue. I am all for allowing people access through our farm to go hunting or fishing on the river and have never turned anyone away from access to the river if they have asked us but believe although this plan may make for more access to the Taieri river it is a logistical nightmare around firearms being used for waterfowling with a cycle trail in close proximity. We need some input from Fish and Game to help the locals out of this situation and keep the trail near a main road rather than through private property and recreational land we have cherished and cared for in respect to hunting and fishing. I remember Ian Hadland floating the river checking licences when I was a kid and received a DVD from him on introduction to duck hunting. I wish for these same experiences to happen for generations to come instead of having to take a child to the same location to ride their bike instead and only tell them the stories of my childhood instead of having them make memories that'll last a lifetime.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Sam Young

13.4 General Correspondence Out
Nil

14.0 Items to be Received or Noted

14.1 2023 Southern Reservoir Take a Kid Fishing & Adult Beginner Spin Fishing Classes

On the weekends of the 2nd & 3rd September and 9th & 10th September 2023, the Otago Fish & Game Council held four 'Take a Kid Fishing' (TAKF) events at the Southern Reservoir.

Planning

The DCC approved four Fish & Game Council TAKF events at the Southern Reservoir. A conditional agreement has been reached to use the venue for future events.

Sponsorship

The Otago Community Trust generously donated \$1879.00 towards the event. The money was used for things such as toilet hire, traffic management, fish transportation.

Promotion

The TAKF day was promoted on the Otago Fish & Game Facebook page and an email was sent out to all the Dunedin Schools.

Access

The Southern Reservoir is closed for fishing for September. This is to facilitate the liberation of trout and help improve catch-rates for the events. The reservoir was visited randomly during this month and there was no evidence of unlawful fishing.

Support

Traffic Management & Control LTD supplies and erects all the road signage for the event. Hirepool supplied the toilets for the weekends. Green Island Lions provided hot food and coffee.

Entries

All entries were taken online using "Survey Monkey". This captures details of the attendees so they can be later contacted for follow up surveys.

Format of events

There were four sessions over the two weekends (one session per day). All the sessions were held from 10 am to 12 pm. On the day of the event, participants were greeted by our friendly volunteer rangers and staff, signed in and then found a spot around the reservoir to fish. The "Take Me Fishing" trailer was set up beside the registration table, children that didn't have a fishing rod or the rod they bought along was not suitable for trout fishing could borrow one for the event.

The TAKF trailer has 40 rod and reel sets for loan and many of the rods were used across the four sessions.

Stocking of the Southern Reservoir

Approximately 600 two-year-old rainbow trout were set aside at the Macraes Trout Hatchery for the event. 400 fish were transported and released into the reservoir 5 days before the first event which was held on the 2nd of September. Another 200 fish were released into the reservoir the week after the first weekend.

Events

Saturday 2nd September: 143 children registered for the day.

(41 didn't show)

Sunday 3rd September: 201 children registered for the day.

(92 didn't show)

Saturday 9th September: 139 children registered + 9 extra on the day.

(55 didn't show)

Sunday 10th September: 151 children registered + 4 extra on the day.

(50 didn't show)

Overall registered = 634

Overall attended = 396

Overall, no show = 238

Extras on the day = 13

Overall, this equates to a no-show rate: 38%

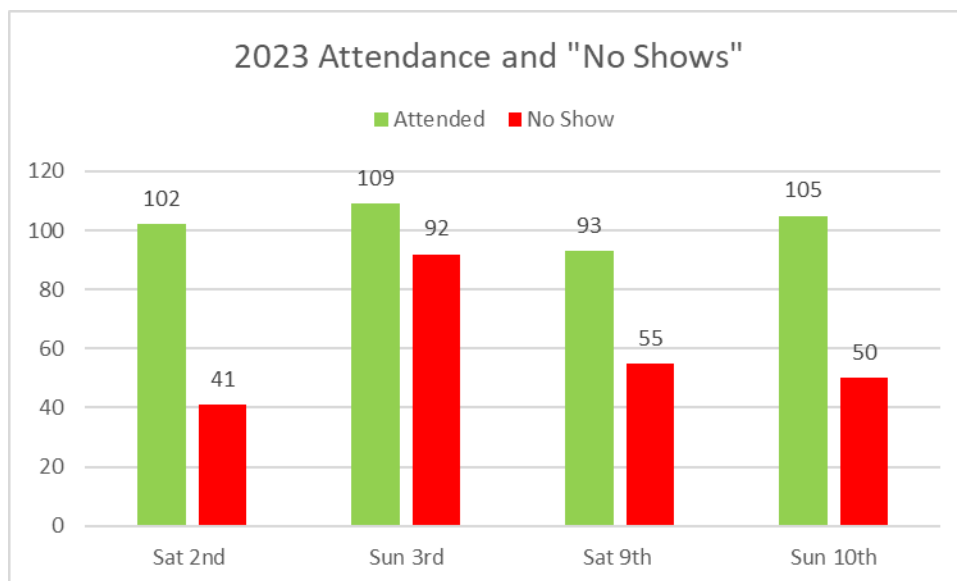


Figure 1: Attendance rates for all 4 sessions

The *no-show rate* jumped from 29% last year to 38% this year. The only reason I can see for this increase would be the cold weather on the days of the events.

This year, there was no form to fill out with catch data. In past years, the form was returned with just a name for the lucky draw and little by way of catch information. As with last year it was decided to survey all attendees via email to gather information.

Some of the questions asked were:

- How many fish did you take home?
- How many fish did you return?
- Do you have any suggestions for future TAKF events?

Survey Results and feedback

378 families were sent the survey, with 143 completed responses.

Out of the completed responses:

17 fish were harvested (across the 4 days)

18 fish were caught and returned to the reservoir (across the 4 days)

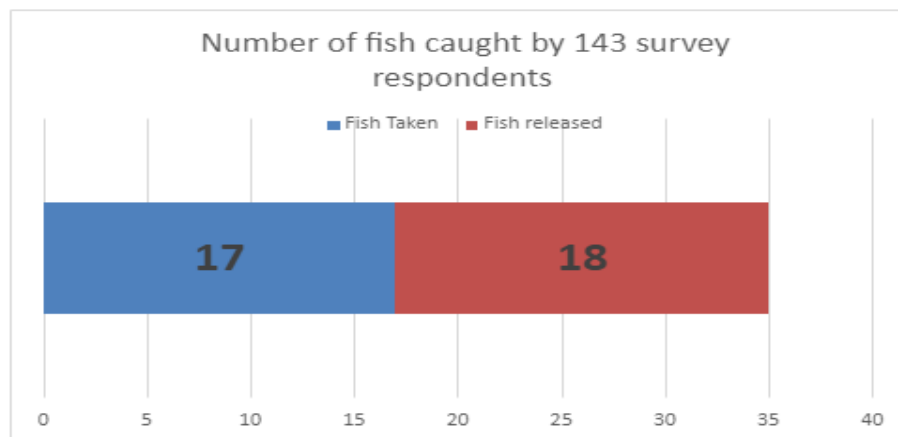


Figure 2: Overall catch from survey respondents

Participants were also asked if they had any suggestions for future events. All responses are summarised in appendix 1 below.

Children that caught fish were able to keep the fish if they wished which were gutted and cleaned by Fish & Game rangers.

Fish & Game rangers and volunteers walked around the reservoir giving advice on knot tying, casting, and assisting with the landing and releasing of fish.



Kris Hiltrop with Mia (6) & Luka (8)

Beginner Adults Fishing Class

For the last ten years, Otago Fish & Game Council has been running adult beginner fishing classes. This year there were 3 classes in Dunedin (19th, 20th, 21st Sept) and one class in Cromwell (27th Oct).

Advertising was by way of the Fish & Game web site and on Facebook.

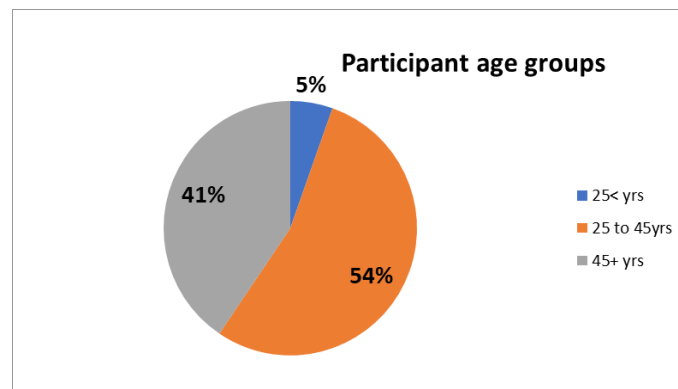


Figure 3: Relative percentage of participants across age groups

Dunedin classes - there was a 2hr theory session (held in the Dunedin office boardroom) with a PowerPoint presentation on equipment, knots, fish species, where fish can be found, licences etc and on Saturday 23rd the classes were combined and a 1.5hr practical session was held at the Southern Reservoir. There were 34 registrations for the Dunedin classes (2 no-show). Twenty-four beginner anglers came to the fishing lesson at Southern Reservoir on September 23. Nine rainbow trout and one brown trout were caught, six fish were caught on soft baits by one person. The other anglers were fishing with metal lures.

Cromwell class - Thirteen people registered for the Cromwell adult beginner fishing class, which was held on October 27-28 due to a weather delay in September. An evening theory class was held in the Bannockburn Room of the Cromwell Presbyterian Church, followed by a fishing trip to Lake Dunstan the next morning. Participants had a great time learning about freshwater sports fishing. Although the practical lesson was lacking in fish numbers, everyone had a great opportunity to practice their casting technique. One perch made it to the bank and went home for someone's dinner.



Combined Dunedin beginner adult fishing class – Southern Reservoir

Acknowledgements

Otago Community Trust, DCC, Macraes Oceana Gold, Traffic Management & Control LTD, Green Island Lions

Volunteers/Rangers

Mike Teasdale, Brian Hutton, Mark Barrett, Dan Natter, Geoff Dee, Robbie Natter

Fish & Game staff

Steven Dixon, Bruce Quirey, Sharon Milne, Ian Hadland, Jayde Couper, Ben Sowry

Recommendations

That this report is received.

**Steven Dixon
Fish & Game Officer
November 2023**

Appendix 1: Suggestions for future events

Hope have another one soon
No, I think it's done really well
Nope. We always enjoy them.
Very well run as all ways.
The event was great and really well done. No suggestions from me
Maybe a reminder a day before the event.
Was an awesome time
Perhaps it could last longer than 2 hours.
More fish over more days for longer period of time
Grenades.
We hope to have more fish in the reservoir.
No. It's so well run, lots of fun for kids, great advice from the wardens. An awesome day. Thanks to all the volunteers that we see year after year helping to make this a success.
like it, will keep coming
Nah looked like it was an awesome day!! My son was unwell unfortunately and missed it
More help for first timers.
Excellent day, thank you!
Prizes and give aways to further interest the kids.
Even though my daughter (8) didn't catch anything she still enjoyed it. Rangers and staff were really good.
provide rods and some teaching of techniques
Great initiative. Fully support it. Very disappointed however, no bites and no fish. There was a lot of excitement and anticipation beforehand from our son and he watched the video of the fish being poured in... I guess that's the gamble of fishing though.
Some wheelchair/accessible parks close to the reservoir
use soft bait
Keep having it the kids loved it! A well-run event and nice to have coffee cart and food available.
Put more fish in!! It was a tough day. Not sure it made me, or the kids want to fish more. If I can't catch a fish in that pond, then I have no hope anywhere else!!
Was great to see the local lions up there with the BBQ going for an awesome family event.
More food and coffee
Consider weather
No, it was great
Maybe hold the event where you can ensure a high catch rate. Only one fish was caught in our time slot which represents a very poor fish catch rate. Hardly encouraging for our future

generations. I would suggest a smaller pond that is highly stocked and fed much like commercial salmon outfits. This was my introduction as a child, and it helped encourage a lifelong passion.
Fun gifts for the kids
If the staff (or whatever the appropriate name is) could offer some tips or advice as they walk around that would be great. We didn't get approached at or spoken to at all in the 1.5 hours we were there.
Great events, well organised! Given there weren't many fish caught on the day, maybe having a small paddling pool with some fish in it (not for catching) would provide kids an up-close look at fish.
The registration process was confusing. I registered for one of the days, then got a reply saying it was full and to register for the other day. Once I'd registered for the other day, I got a confirmation email saying I was registered for the day I had originally registered for which I'd been told was full. I wasn't sure when I was supposed to turn up.
Sausage sizzles was great
No, it's quite awesome as it is!
Great day out. My daughter loved coming along
Less adults fishing, keep it for the kids!
Keep it up!
Control the weather? No not really it was pretty good just the fish weren't cooperative
Was so well run, lovely having hot food and coffee. Thank you will love coming back every year.
No, it was great fun. Thanks
Great event, me and the kids are just unlucky to not catch anything yet.
Fun day out
No, ran very well.
No suggestions, it's a great event, too bad the fish never seem to bite when we're around!
Some fish! It was a great event, thank you so much for hosting.
The kids loved it pity we didn't catch anything
Great event for the kids... maybe more fish released...
No, I think it's good
It's better to do it once a month during the summer
We had a great time despite not catching a fish.
It was really great, first experience and looking forward to coming again.
Great event, keep doing it
Keep up the great work. Kids enjoy going to them.
Less people attending for more space to cast.
They are awesome! Please keep running them
Would be great to catch something but that's fishing
No it was a good event for first timers. Cheers
nope. We need to dress even more warmly!
More fish stock to improve chance of catching one. Advice from helpers would also be appreciated

No. Thank you for the fun day out.
We hope you have it every year, so we can join it next year.
Warmer weather ;-)
Better weather 😊
The Rangers that were there were brilliant, but maybe a few more helpers around would be better.
There were too many people, lines all got crossed. Wasn't enough space for anyone to cast.
Such a wonderful event. We love it.
No. It is a great event.
Put more fish in the pond, or make the area smaller, so kids can actually catch a fish.
No, we had a great time!
Give us a fish
No, well organised and a great opportunity
No amazing event for the kids
They are great although it would be good if parents were allowed to fish alongside the children so the whole family can enjoy the day.
No, it was great

14.2 Shoveler and Grey Teal Trend Monitoring October 2023

Summary

There has been a noticeable downward trend in the total number of shoveler harvested in the Otago Region since 1993, a pattern that is consistent with other regions and the nationwide trend. This decline in harvest numbers should not be seen solely as an indicator of a decrease in the shoveler population. It is likely influenced by a combination of factors, particularly changes in hunting practices such as a shift away from traditional large coastal ponds and alterations to bag limits and season lengths over time.

Based on the limited data available, last year's Gazette review change to the shoveler bag limit has been effective in reducing the harvest in the Otago and Southland regions as well as nationally. It remains too early to tell whether this has affected shoveler populations.

The average number of shoveler counted per site in Otago for 2023 was just above the long-term average, suggesting relative stability. However, this does not account for changes in which sites were monitored over time. Trend analysis suggests a slight long-term decline in shoveler populations both in the Otago Region and nationally.



Photo 1: Male shoveler- left, female shoveler- centre, grey teal – right (Photo – B Quirey).

Introduction

Shoveler/ kuruwhengi (*Anas rhynchos*) are a native game bird that predominantly occupies fertile, lowland, still water habitats. They congregate on certain sites in early August before pairing off for breeding and nesting (Caithness 1982, Holden 1990, Williams 1981).

Shoveler are highly valued by hunters and make up a small (around 0.6% in 2023) but important part of the waterfowl bag. The daily bag limit for shoveler in Otago is set very conservatively at one drake only.

Shoveler are extremely mobile and move rapidly throughout the region and country, consequently shoveler are monitored through a national program that counts the birds throughout the country on the same day.

Grey teal / Tētē-moroiti (*Anas gracilis*) numbers are also monitored through this program. Grey teal are not game birds instead falling under Schedule 3 of the Wildlife Act as “Wildlife that may be hunted or killed subject to conditions imposed by the Minister of Conservation”.

Methods

Harvest estimates in this report are calculated from an ongoing national phone survey of licenced hunters, full details on methods available in the Whole Season Game Bird Harvest and Activity report (Couper 2023).

Shoveler and grey teal were counted at 38 sites throughout the region (Figure 1) using a combination of binoculars and spotting scopes. Counts were conducted on the 7th of August 2023 to align with the national count. Otago Fish & Game staff were assisted by Councillor Adrian McIntyre.

Surveyors also record a number of environmental variables including, wind direction and strength, rain, cloud cover and tides where relevant.

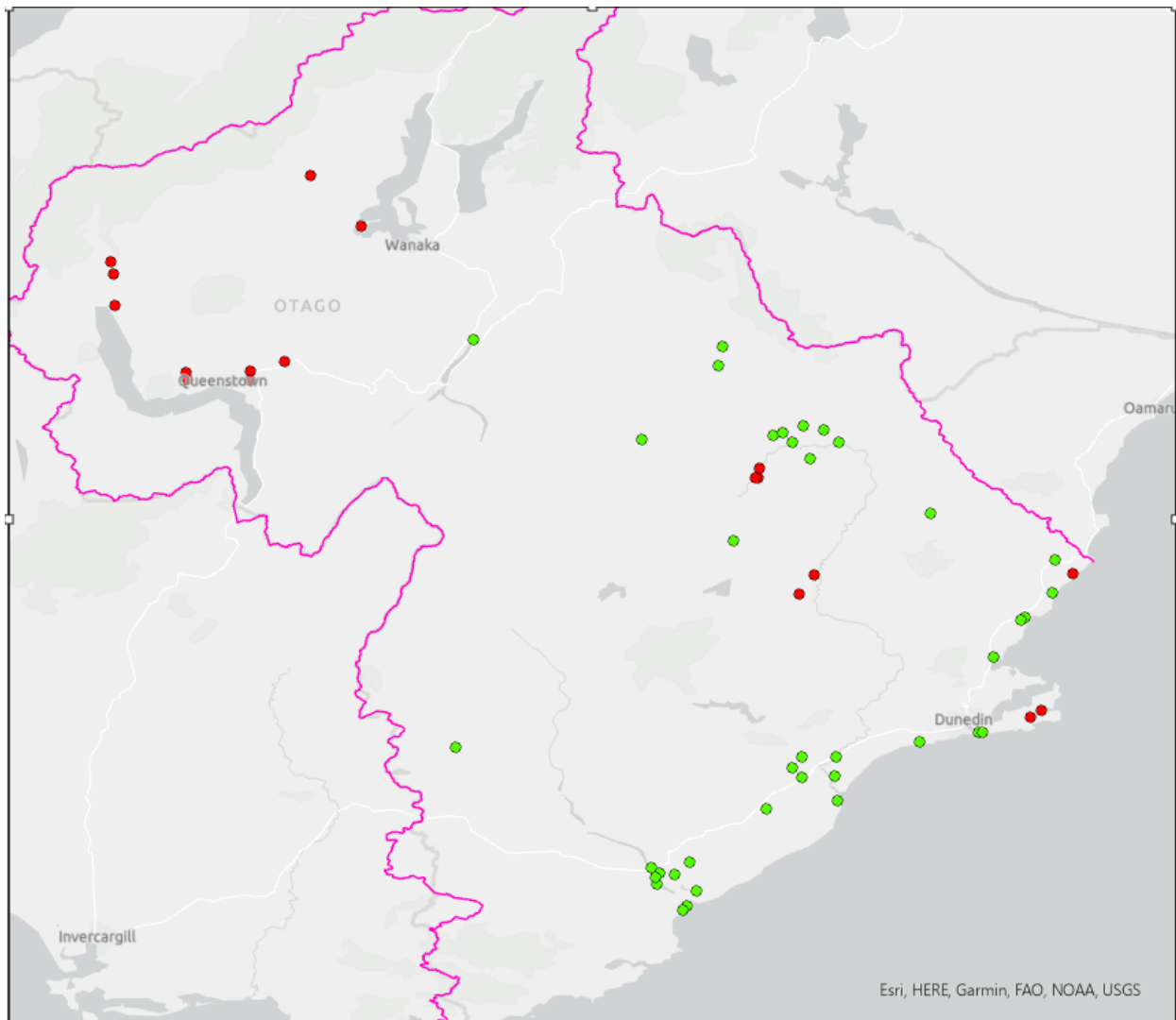


Figure 1: Map of historical shoveler survey sites. Sites surveyed this year shown in green, otherwise in red. Otago Fish & Game regional boundary shown in pink.

Results

Otago Region Hunter Harvest

Since 1993, there has been a downward trend in the total number of shoveler harvested in the Otago Region, as shown in Figure 2. This trend aligns with patterns observed in all other regions and the nationwide trend. However, this decline should not be interpreted as a definitive indication of a population decrease, as it is likely attributable to a combination of factors, especially changes in hunting practices. These include a shift away from traditional large coastal ponds and alterations in bag limits and season lengths over time. For instance, in 2008, the bag limit in Otago was reduced from five to two, which could have significantly impacted the harvest numbers, although this has not been tested.

More recent regulatory changes for the 2023 season saw the Otago Fish and Game Council revising the bag limit from two shoveler in total to only one drake shoveler, while the Southland Fish and Game Council moved from two shoveler in total to two drake shoveler only. These adjustments in bag limits appear to have achieved their intended effect, as both regions reported their lowest total shoveler

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harvests this season, a trend not reflected in the CSI or North Canterbury. Interestingly, the West Coast Region, despite no change in shoveler regulations, exhibited a similar pattern. It is important to note that the West Coast typically harvests only about a tenth of the Otago Region's total and is likely to have less of an impact on national populations. Due largely to the high contribution of Otago and Southland to national harvest, the national total shoveler harvest was also at its lowest recorded level.

To better understand the impact of these regulatory changes, it would be advantageous for the regulations to remain stable for a period of 3-5 years. This would provide more robust data to assess the effectiveness of these gazette adjustments.

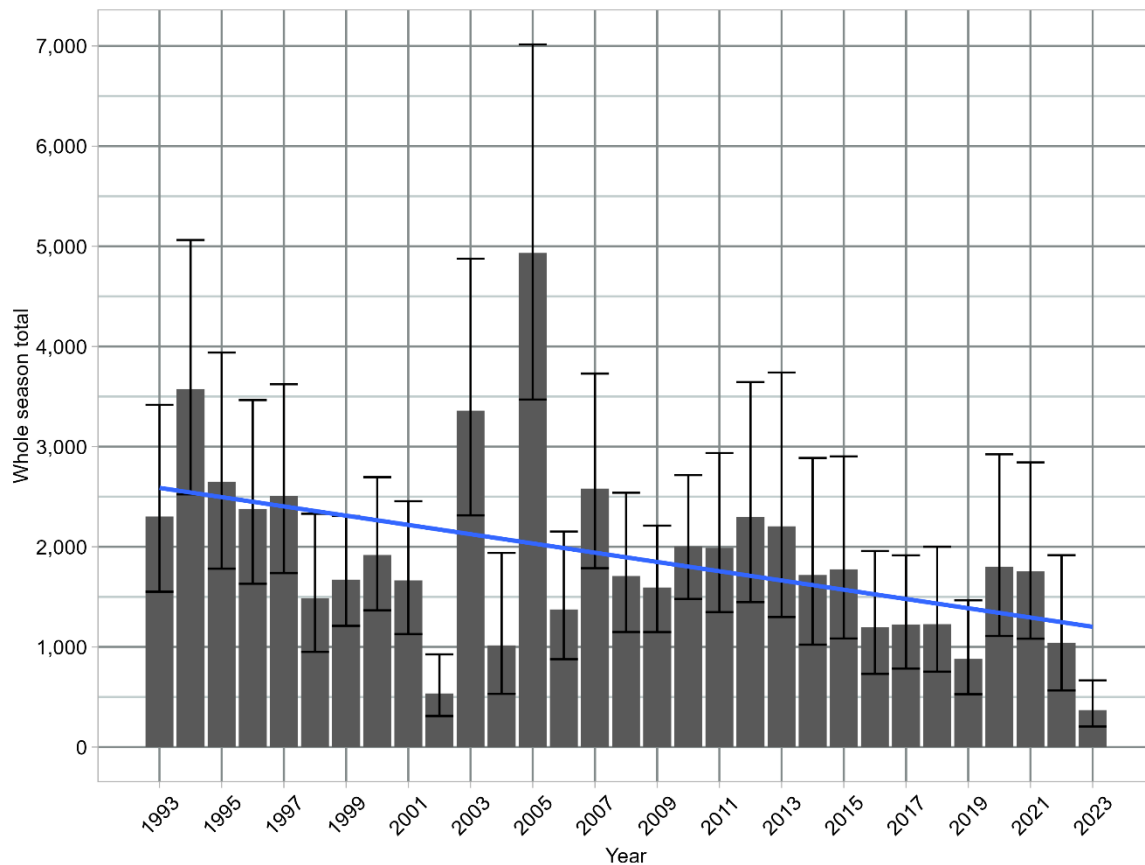


Figure 2: Whole season total shoveler harvest in the Otago Region. Long-term trend line shown in blue.

Otago Region Count Results

Figure 3 shows the average number of shoveler counted across 38 sites in Otago. The average for 2023 was just above the long-term average. Although the chart indicates relative stability it does not reflect changes in monitoring sites over time due to alterations in habitat and staff workloads. Moreover, the data does not account for the probable significant movement of shoveler into and out of the Otago Region.

As shoveler cluster on specific habitats and there is currently no database of the extent of this habitat, sites have been selected by staff as known shoveler congregation spots. This non-randomised survey means that we are unable to make strong judgments on the total regional or national population based on this survey.

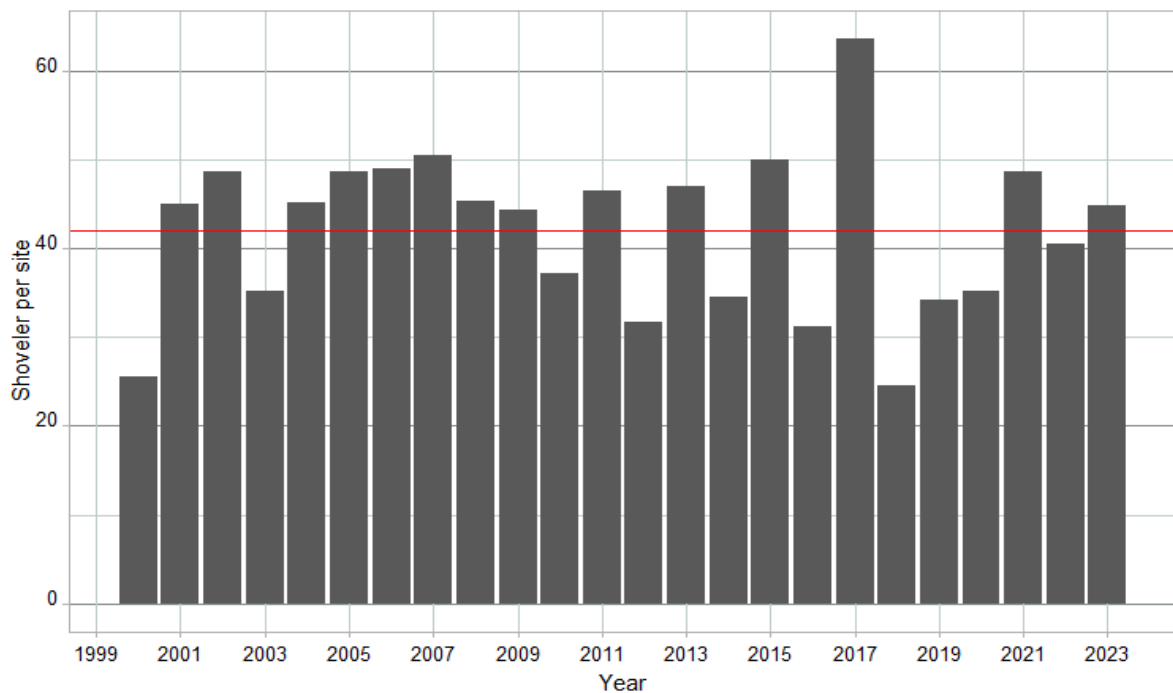


Figure 3: Average number of shoveler per Otago site. Long term mean shown in red.

Grey teal numbers per site were slightly below the long-term average (Figure 4). Although sites have been selected to monitor shoveler, grey teal occupy similar habitats, meaning this survey is a useful tool to monitor their numbers.

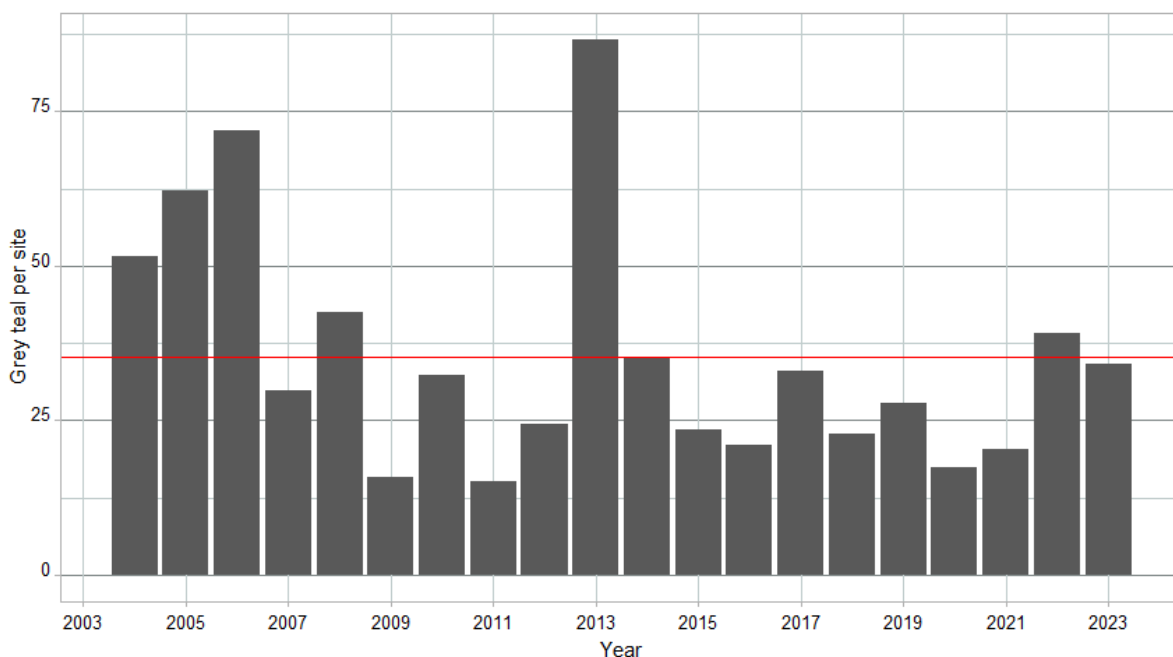


Figure 4: Average number of grey teal per Otago site. Long term mean shown in red.

To account for variations in the sites being monitored, the data have also been analysed using route regression, a Fish & Game standard operating procedure detailed in Teal, 2003. This

method reduces the impact of annual fluctuations by calculating the average of the long-term trends in naturally logged counts across each monitored site over specified time frames (Stevens, 2021). Natural logarithmic transformation of counts ensures that high-variability sites like Lake Tuakitoto do not skew the overall data. An extensive scientific assessment by Sauer & Droege (1990) showed that “route-regression methodology is most efficient in the estimation of long-term (>5 year) trends and tends to provide conservative results for low-density species”.

Figure 5 presents the results of the route regression analysis, illustrating fluctuations in the Otago shoveler populations across various prolonged periods, expressed as a percentage change over time. The data indicate a marginal, though not statistically significant, decline in the Otago shoveler numbers over the long term.

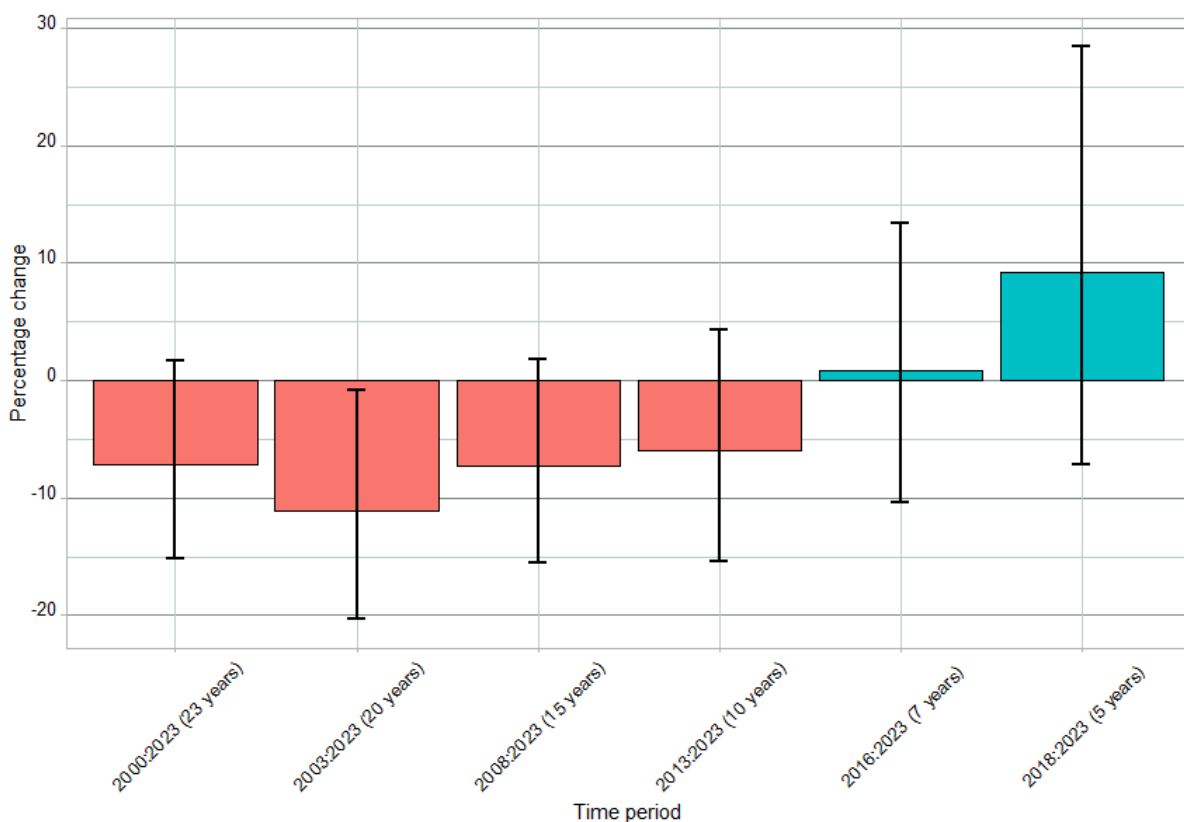


Figure 5: Percentage change in Otago Region shoveler numbers over varying periods with 95% confidence intervals. Increasing trend for period shown in blue, decreasing trend in red.

National Results

This trend discussed above however, does not take into account the migratory nature of shoveler and may represent a shift in bird behaviour rather than a change in the population. To account for the highly migratory nature of shoveler, all region’s counts are jointly analysed by Matt McDougall of Eastern Fish & Game.

The report for 2023 states that:

Fish and Game New Zealand conducted a national count of kuruwhengi, Australasian shoveler duck (Spatula (Anas) rhynchotis) on 7 August 2023.

This is the 24th annual count (2000 – 2023) to monitor change in the New Zealand shoveler duck population.

Four indices were examined, total national count (n=256 survey sites), the sum of counts from sites that have been counted every year (n=75), a two-year (2022–2023) and a 24-year trend (2000–2023). The 2023 count (12,272) increased 34% on the 2022 count. However, the long-term trend indicates a very small decrease (average change =-0.02; 95% CI -0.04 – 0.0; n=249). The total counts at the 75 sites that have been counted every year was the lowest (3,936) since 2000.

The national survey is an index of population change. Count sites were not randomly selected so inference about national shoveler populations must be made with caution.

Fish and Game regions may wish to take into consideration an apparent small decrease in the population trend when recommending their 2024 shoveler duck regulations.

The 2023 national shoveler trend count report is available by request.

Recommendation

That the report is received

Jayde Couper
Fish & Game Officer
November 2023

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14.3 Whole Season Game Bird Harvest and Activity

Executive Summary

The 2023 Otago game bird season was below average in most of the key metrics that we measure. The primary reason for this was a reduction in the hours spent hunting on Opening Weekend.

The significant outlier to this trend was the paradise shelduck harvest which increased this year to levels not seen since 2010.

Overall, there were a total of almost 64,500 gamebirds harvested this season, greylards (mallards, grey ducks and hybrids) made up almost 70 percent of harvest with paradise shelduck contributing over a quarter of the total number of birds harvested.

Introduction

The game bird harvest survey estimates total harvest, effort and the average hunter's season bag for each game bird species in New Zealand. The survey covers all of New Zealand however each Fish & Game region is responsible for surveying their own hunters. The survey has been running since 1993 and provides an excellent long-term dataset on game bird hunting in New Zealand.

For clarity, in this report:

- "Greylard" refers to mallard ducks, grey ducks, and their hybrids. This term was coined because of the challenge in distinguishing pure mallard ducks from grey ducks.
- "Waterfowl" includes greylards, paradise shelduck, black swans, shoveler, and pukeko.

The Otago portion of the survey consists of calling 200 randomly selected adult and junior Otago hunting licence holders following Opening Weekend, then 120 every two weeks through to the end of July. The extended August season for upland game, paradise shelduck and black swans is surveyed by single survey at the start of September.

Harvest estimates exclude harvest during the paradise shelduck “summer” season and that of child licence holders, day licence holders and unlicensed hunters including landowners who hunt their own land under the owner/occupier exemption.

The regional harvest totals are a product of the three following factors:

1. Number of birds hunted per hour.
2. Hours spent by license holders on hunting.
3. Total licenses sold.

Where possible, statistical tests have been included. The 95% confidence intervals, depicted as bars on some graphs, provide a range of likely values. This means if the survey were repeated, in 95% of the iterations, the actual value would lie within this range. The length of these intervals is influenced by the number of interviews conducted, the total hunters in the region, and variability among interviewed hunters. Furthermore, "p" values have been provided, indicating the confidence in observed effects. A smaller "p" value signals higher confidence. Commonly, a "p" value below 0.05 is deemed significant.

Results

Hours Hunting Waterfowl

Total hours spent hunting for waterfowl in the Otago Region has shown a general decline over the last ten years (Figure 6), this is largely caused by a reduction in hours spent hunting on Opening Weekend. While the total number of waterfowling hours for 2023 was just under 10 percent lower than the ten-year average, it was slightly above last year's total.

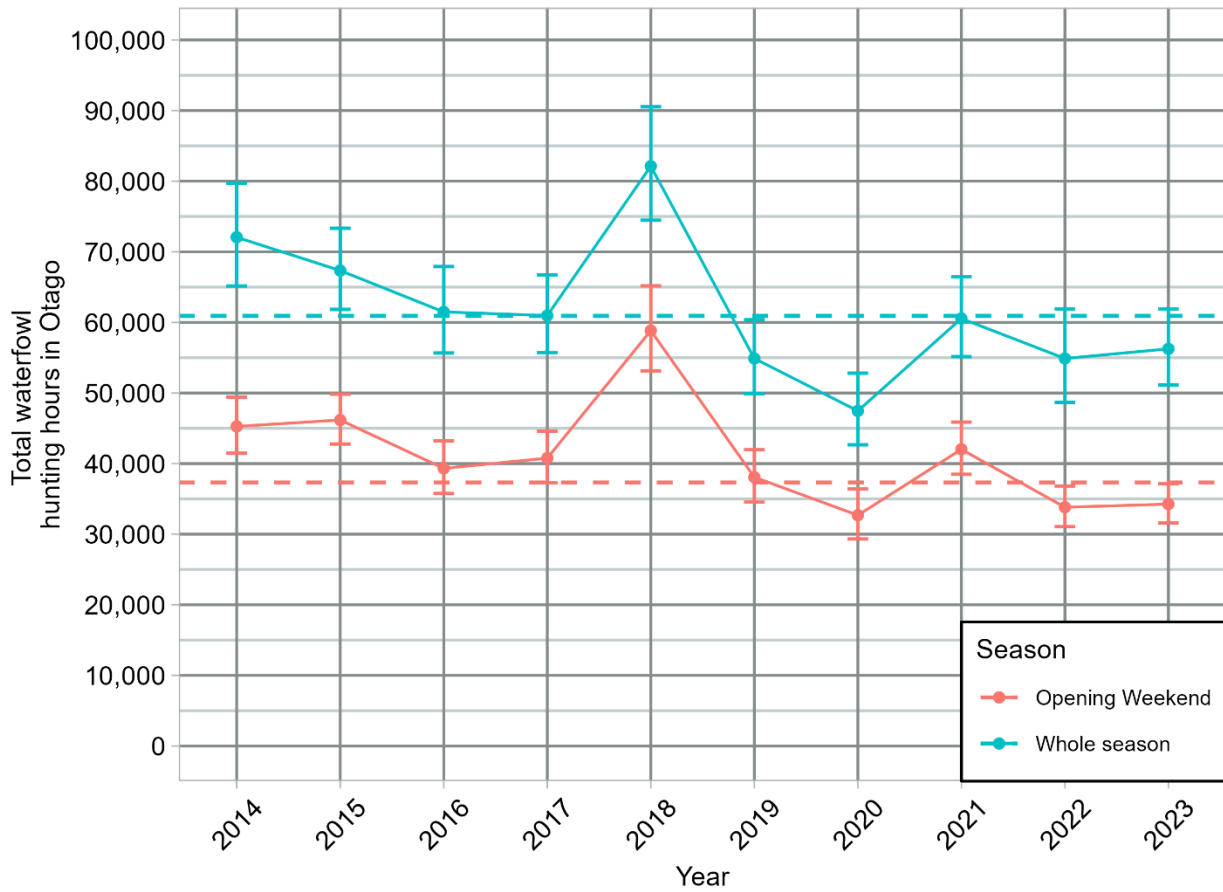


Figure 6: Total number of hours spent hunting in Otago on Opening Weekend and the whole season for 2014– 2023 and the average number of Opening Weekend and whole season hours for the period (dashed lines).

Figure 7 shows the percentage of hours spent during Opening Weekend out of the whole season total since 1993. This year almost 61 percent of time spent hunting was on Opening Weekend, this is almost 10 percentage points behind the highest on record, experienced in 2018. The percentage of hunting occurring on Opening Weekend has shown a statistically significant increasing trend since the start of the game bird harvest survey ($p < .001$), which strongly suggests a shift in hunter behaviour. Despite this trend last year's result showed a sharp downturn which persisted this year, which may have been partly due to the extension of the season in 2022.

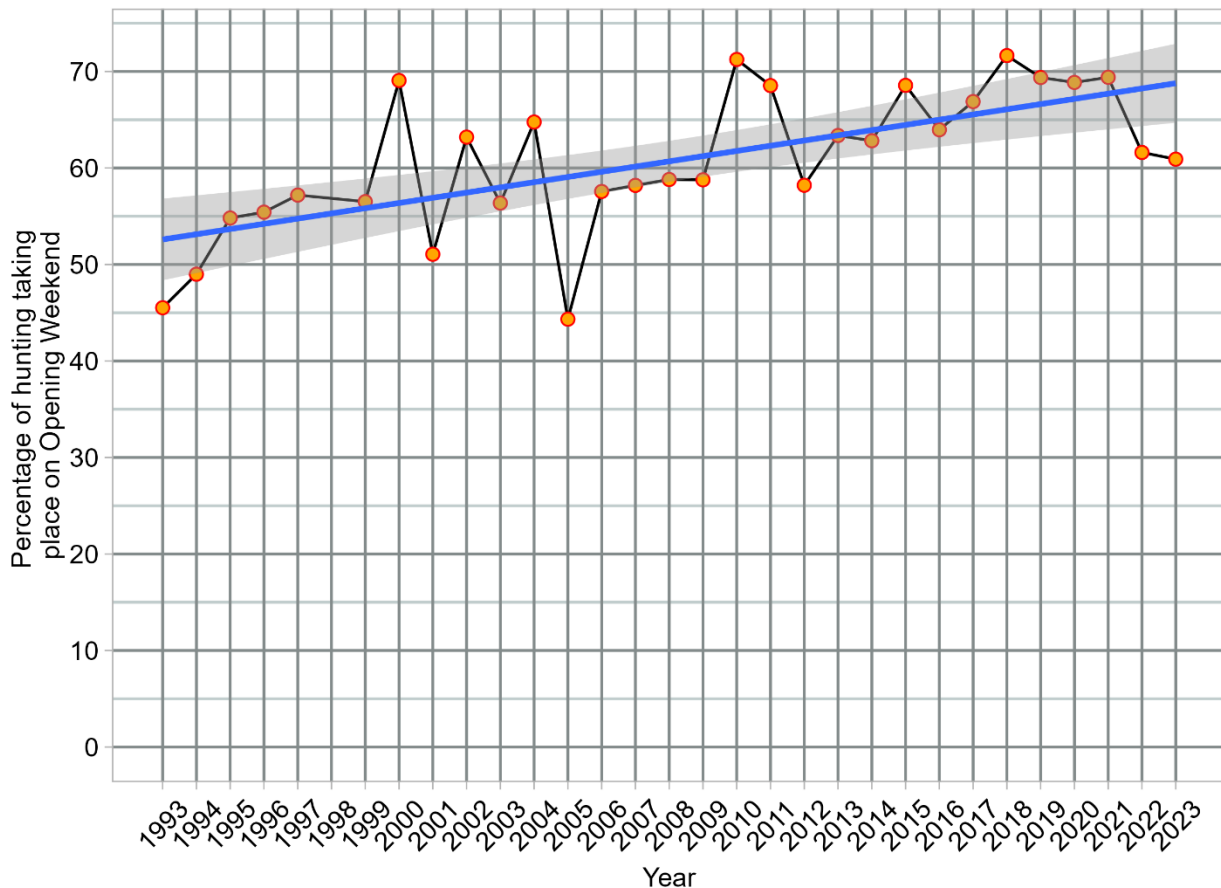


Figure 7: Percentage of whole season waterfowl hunting hours spent on Opening Weekend since 1993. Long term trend is shown in blue with the 95% confidence interval for the trendline in grey. Please note 1998 has been removed from the analysis due to incomplete data.

In the 2021 Game Gazette review, Council voted to increase the length of the waterfowl season by two weeks, extending it out to the last weekend in July. Table 1 outlines the amount of activity that occurred in the last two weeks of the main 2022 season. The harvest of Southland Region hunters is not included in these calculations as their hunters are not surveyed past the end of their season. It is likely that a reasonable number of Southland hunters came to hunt the Otago Region during this period. Despite the lack of Southland hunters' activity, the numbers presented in Table 1 likely exaggerate the effects of the increased season length as it is known from previous surveys that an increased number of licence holders will hunt at the end of the season regardless of when it is. Consequently, the

numbers can be safely viewed as showing the potential maximum effect of the season length increase.

Table 1: Activity occurring in the last two weeks of the main season (17th to 30th July) and the rest of the main waterfowl season (6th of May to 16th July).

	Activity occurring in extra two weeks	Activity occurring in rest of season	Percent of activity occurring in extra two weeks of season
Number of hours hunting waterfowl	1,552	54,699	2.8%
Number of greylards harvested	1,094	43,891	2.4%
Number of paradise shelduck harvested	247	17,121	1.4%
Number of black swan harvested	141	429	24.7%
Number of shoveler harvested	71	299	19.2%

Licence Sales

One of the major factors affecting the daily total hunting hours outlined in Figure 6 above is the total number of licence holders in the region. Figure 8 shows Otago licence sales since 1993. Long-term there has been a general upward trend in licence sales, however this has turned over the last ten years. This year's sales at 4,325 are the eighth highest on record and slightly down on sales in 2022.

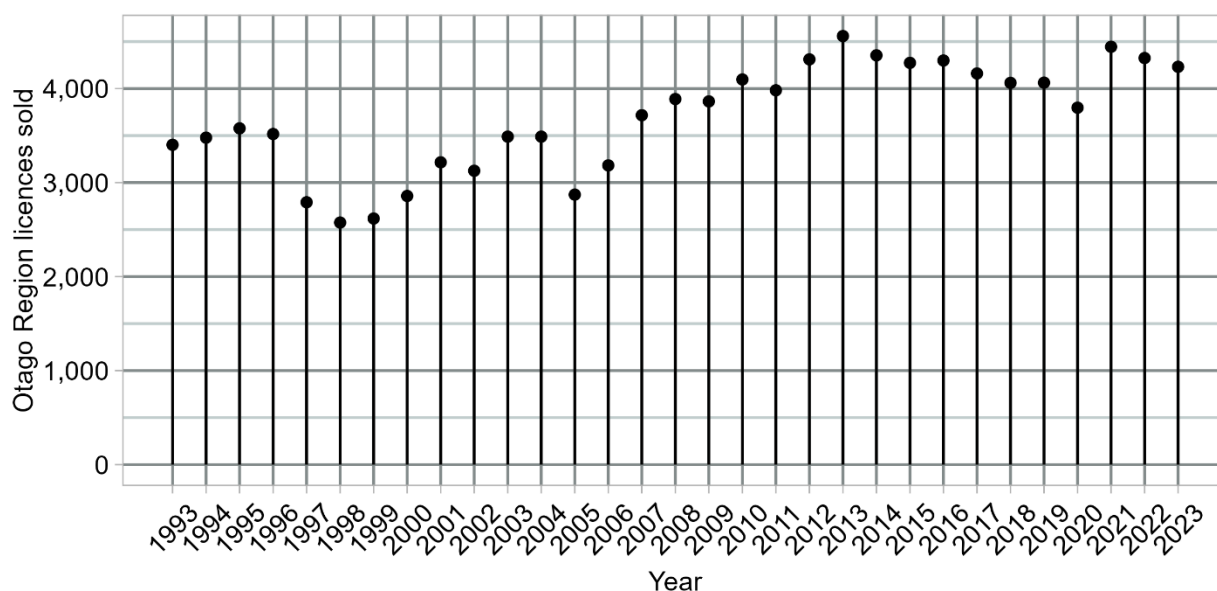


Figure 8: Otago adult and junior whole season game bird licence sales.

Total Harvest

Almost 64,500 game birds were harvested this season in the Otago Region (Figure 9). Greylards were the most common game bird making up almost 70 percent of total season

waterfowl harvest, with paradise shelduck making up a further 27 percent. Due to extremely low harvest, the survey did not detect any harvest of pheasants or chukar this season.

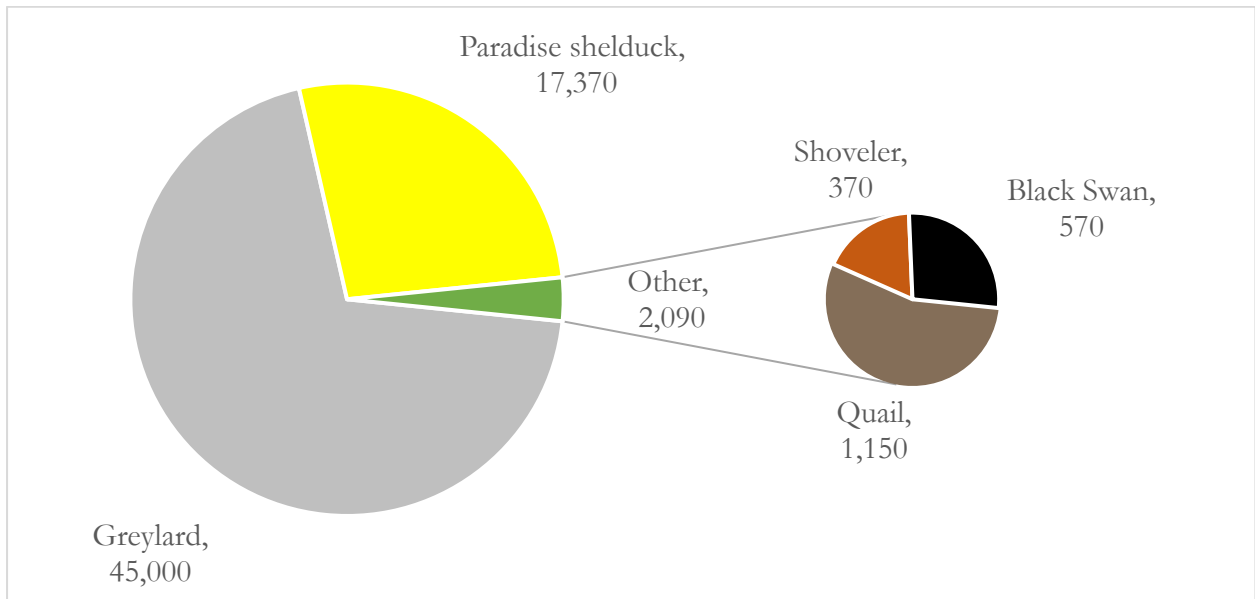


Figure 9: Whole season waterfowl harvest broken down by species in the Otago Region for 2023.

Paradise Shelduck

We estimate that 17,370 paradise shelduck were harvested in the Otago Region this hunting season, around a quarter higher than last year’s total and the long-term average (Figure 10).

Paradise shelduck harvest in the Otago Region has shown a statistically significant increasing trend ($p=0.001$) since 1993 suggesting that paradise shelduck availability has increased or that hunters are more inclined to harvest them.

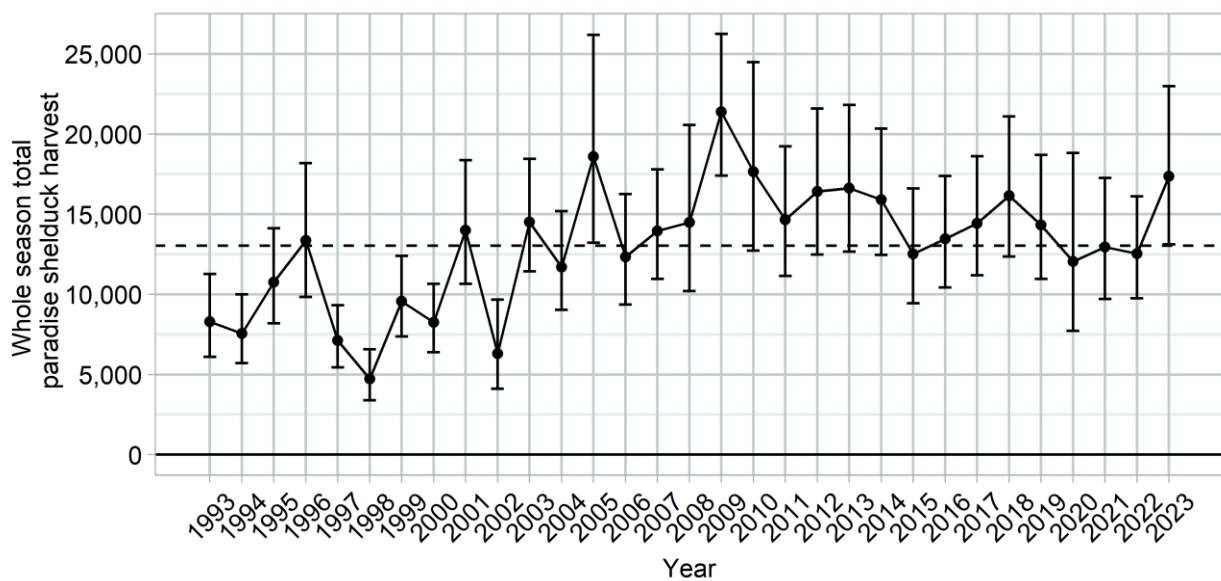


Figure 10: Whole season total paradise shelduck harvest for 1993-2023 with 95% confidence intervals and the average for the period (dotted line).

Greylards

Figure 11 shows total greylard harvest since 1993. There is a reasonably large variation in the number of greylards harvested, with a very slight and statistically insignificant ($p=0.976$) downward trend spanning the period. The greylard harvest for 2023 was 45,000 birds, the fifth lowest on record and around 2,500 less than last year's harvest and significantly below the long-term average of 57,200 birds.

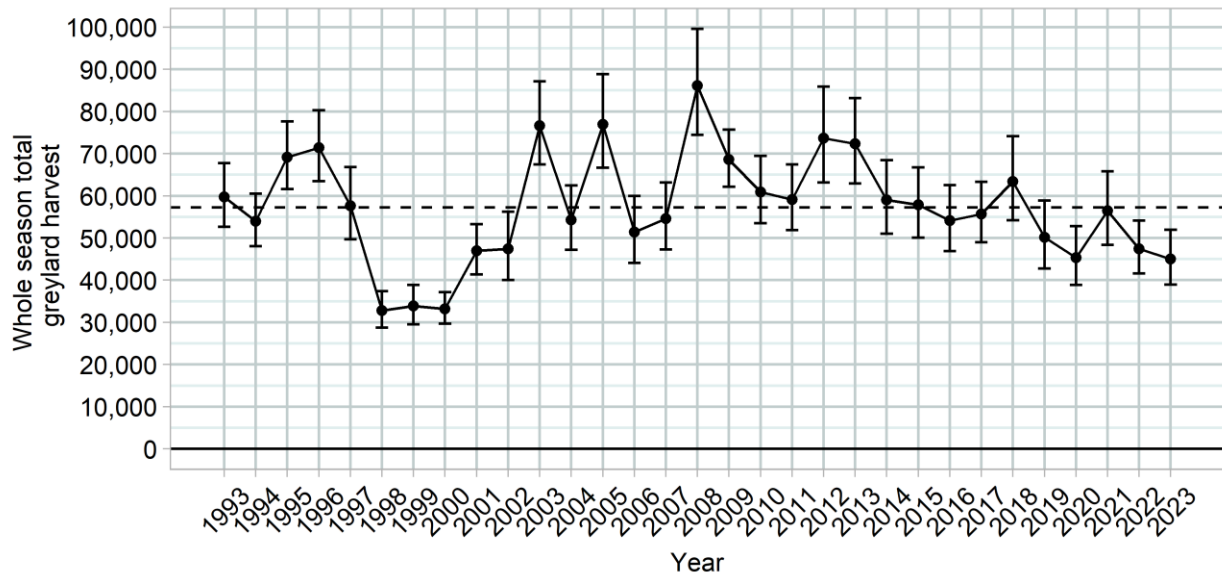


Figure 11: Whole season total greylard harvest for 1993-2023 with 95% confidence intervals and the long-term average (dotted line).

Figure 12 shows the average rate that hunters in Otago harvest greylards and is likely one of the best indicators of hunter satisfaction. There has been a slight and statistically insignificant downward trend ($p=0.16$) over the survey period. The average harvest rate of greylards this season was 0.80 birds per hour, below the long-term mean at 0.94. Greylard harvest rates appear to be relatively stable over this period.

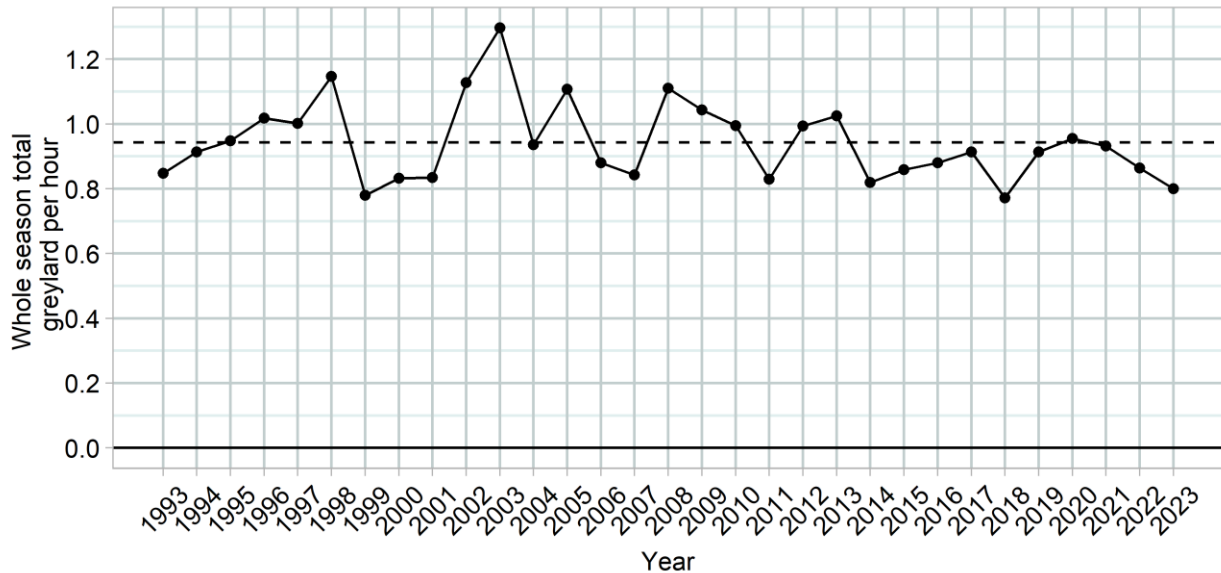


Figure 12: Average number of greylard harvested per hour for 1993-2023 and the average for this period (dotted line).

Figure 13 shows the Otago Region broken down by its five territorial district authority boundaries. The Waitaki District has been trimmed to only represent hunting within the Otago Fish & Game boundary. Greylard harvest in terms of birds per hour was highest in the Central Otago District at slightly over one bird per hour and lowest in the Waitaki District at 0.28 birds per hour.

Relative to the 2015-2023 period, only the Central Otago District was above the average in terms of greylards per hour. The Clutha and Waitaki districts were significantly below their averages while the Dunedin City and Queenstown Lakes were slightly below their averages. Over the presented period there is a general increasing trend for the Central Otago, Clutha and Queenstown-Lakes districts and a decreasing trend for the Dunedin City and Waitaki districts.

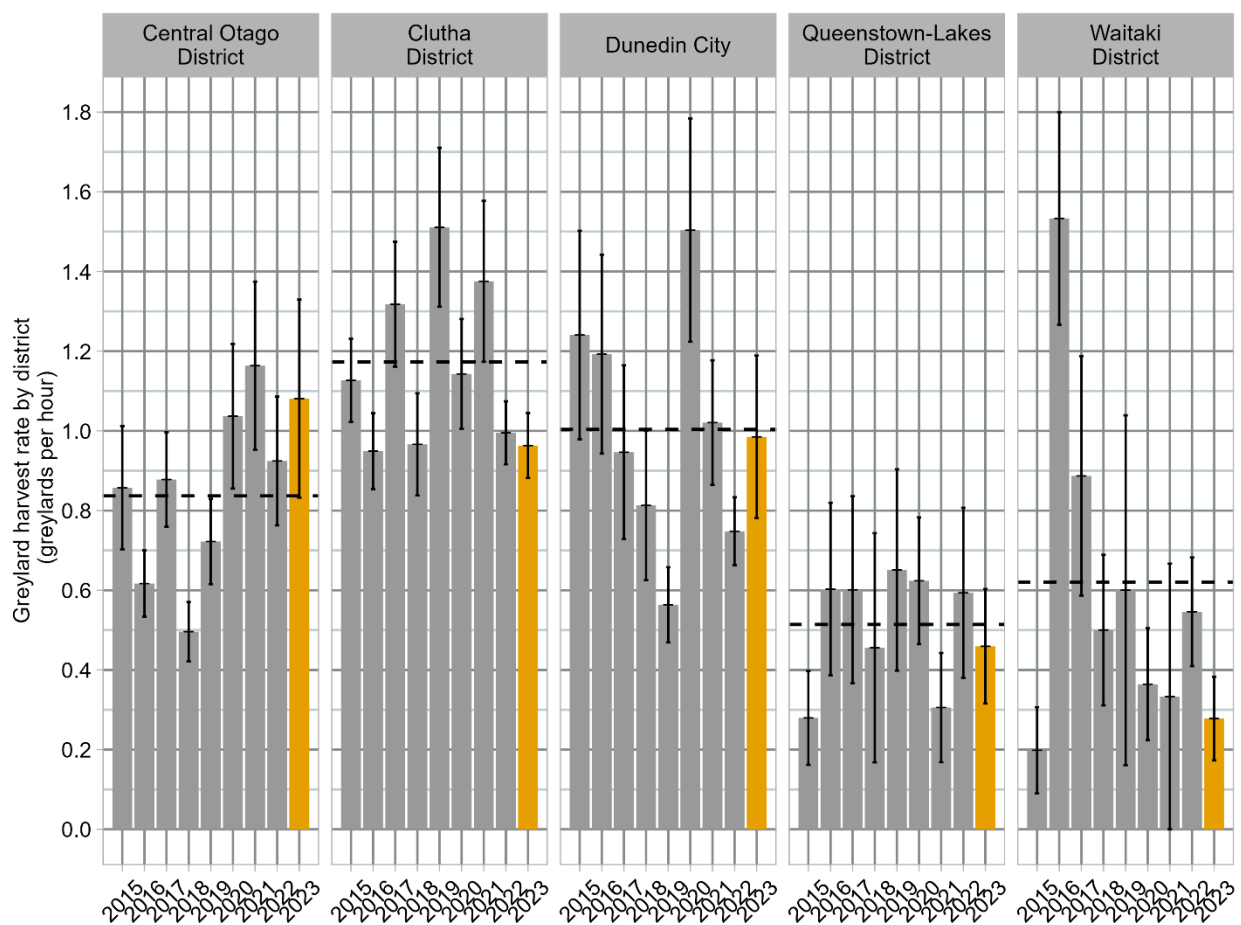


Figure 13: Greylard harvest rate in the Otago region’s territorial districts since 2015. Current year’s harvest rate shown in orange, the black dotted line indicates the average for each district for the period.

Recommendation

This report be received.

Jayde Couper
 Fish & Game Officer
 October 2023

14.4 Upper Catlins River Catchment Investigation 2022-2023

An investigation conducted across 2022 and 2023 into the upper Catlins River catchment revealed significant ecological value, yet also highlighted challenges arising from environmental stressors, poor access provisions, and invasive plant species.

Access to the upper river was found to be limited due to a lack of marginal strips and the proliferation of riparian gorse, however, efforts to control gorse were observed.

Moderate levels of spawning were observed, supported by electric fishing and habitat surveys, which indicated healthy populations of juvenile trout and suitable habitats.

Most sites contained high species diversity with brown trout and kōura found at every site.

It is recommended that discussions with new landowners are initiated to negotiate access to the upper river and to collaborate on the ongoing management of the riparian zone.



Photo 2: Locals Lachlan and Darcy Cairns assist with measuring long fin eels.

Introduction

In 2022, several tributaries of the upper Catlins River were surveyed for spawning brown trout. Following this a more in-depth investigation of the current conditions of the upper catchment was conducted in 2023. This investigation involved: further spawning surveys, electric fishing, habitat surveys and a desktop review of access and previous Fish & Game work on the catchment. The survey area is outlined below in *Figure 14*.

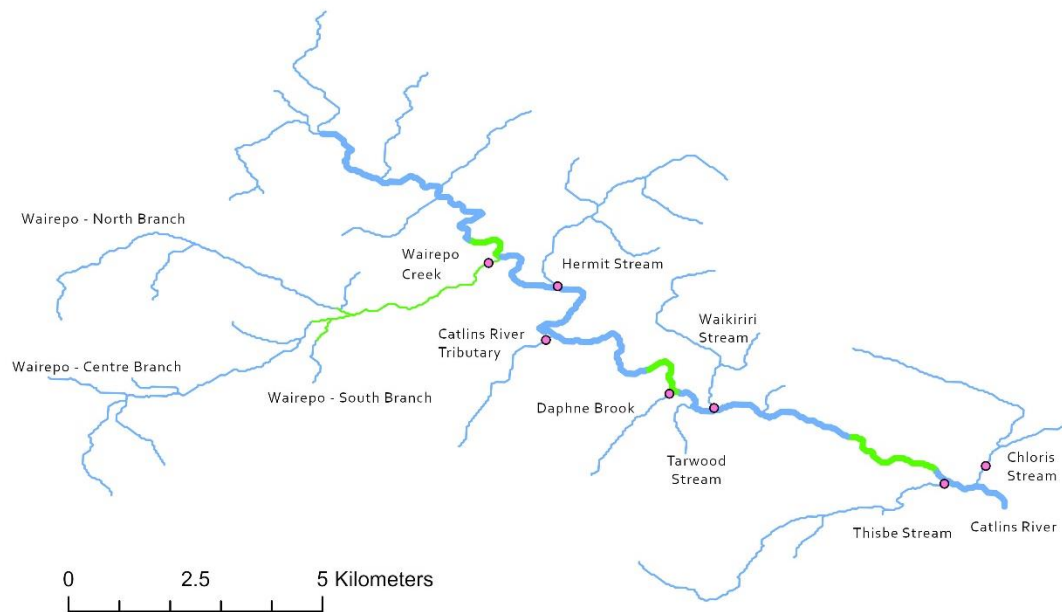


Figure 14: Map of upper Catlins waterways. Sections surveyed for brown trout spawning in 2023 shown in green. Electric fishing and habitat survey sites as pink dots.

Results

Spawning

Year 1 – 2022 Totals

Spawning surveys were conducted by Officer Dixon on the 17th of May 2022. All spawning surveys carried out in 2022 were located in the reach immediately upstream of the confluence with the Catlins River. The results of these surveys are shown in *Table 2* below:

Table 2: Results from 2022 spawning surveys.

Waterway	Distance surveyed (km)	Redds	Adult brown trout
Cooper Stream	0.14	0	0
Chloris Stream	0.20	0	0
Tarwood Stream	0.15	0	0
Catlins River tributary	0.14	0	1
Wairepo Creek	0.50	0	0
Total	1.13	0	1

Only one adult trout was seen in 2022 and there was no evidence of spawning or redds (nests). Good spawning and rearing habitat was logged throughout the surveyed reaches. It was noted that surveying the upper Catlins catchment was difficult due to the tannin-stained water and prodigious vegetation. It was however deemed a practical monitoring method for at least parts of the upper catchment.

Year 2 – 2023 Totals

Further spawning surveys were conducted on the 31st of May 2023. A total of 15 redds were seen while surveying a total length of 7.86 km which meant a moderate density of spawning of 1.9 redds per km (*Table 3*). Redd density was the highest in lower reaches of both the Catlins River and Wairepo Creek. A small distance of the three largest tributaries at the head of Wairepo Creek were walked with little evidence of spawning observed.

Table 3: Results from 2023 spawning surveys.

Waterway	Distance surveyed (km)	Redds	Redds per km	Adult brown trout
Catlins River - Lower	1.74	5	2.9	0
Catlins River - Mid	0.99	2	2.0	3
Catlins River – Upper	0.86	1	1.2	0
Catlins River - Total	3.59	8	2.3	3
Wairepo Creek - Main	2.85	6	2.1	4
Wairepo Creek – South	0.53	0	0.0	0
Wairepo Creek – Centre	0.61	1	1.6	0
Wairepo Creek – North	0.28	0	0.0	0
Wairepo Creek - Total	4.27	7	1.6	4
Total	7.86	15	1.9	7

Catlins River

On the day of the 2023 surveys, the lower and middle reaches of the river was relatively low and clear though there was evidence of a recent flood in the previous couple of months. Despite reduced water clarity from natural tannins, redds were easily identifiable in shallower water, however, counts of trout are an underestimate as fish in deeper water will have been missed.

The bottom reach contained the highest amount of adult trout habitat, with large pools throughout the reach, a number of these pools had extensive macrophyte beds, suggesting they were relatively stable. Approximately one km above the Cairn Road Bridge is a large waterfall that will prevent upstream migration of trout from the lower catchment and is likely to be a key limiting factor on the recruitment of adults to the upper river fishery.



Photo 3: Waterfall on Catlins mainstem approximately one km above the Cairn Road Bridge.

The middle reach contained very few gravel sections and consisted primarily of boulders. Despite the lack of gravel through these sections, the small beds that were seen, contained a relatively high amount of spawning. The lack of gravel in this section is also likely to mean that food production for adult trout will be limited.

The upper reaches of the Catlins River above the Wairepo Creek confluence were slightly turbid, seemingly resulting from cattle having access to the stream. The top section had significantly less flow than the other two due to being above the confluence of Wairepo Creek. There was found to be little adult trout habitat in the upper reach although there was good substrate and mesohabitat, namely riffles, present for both spawning and juvenile rearing.

One of the key issues facing the upper Catlins River currently is the proliferation of invasive plant species, with the most problematic being gorse along the riverbanks (*Photo 4*).

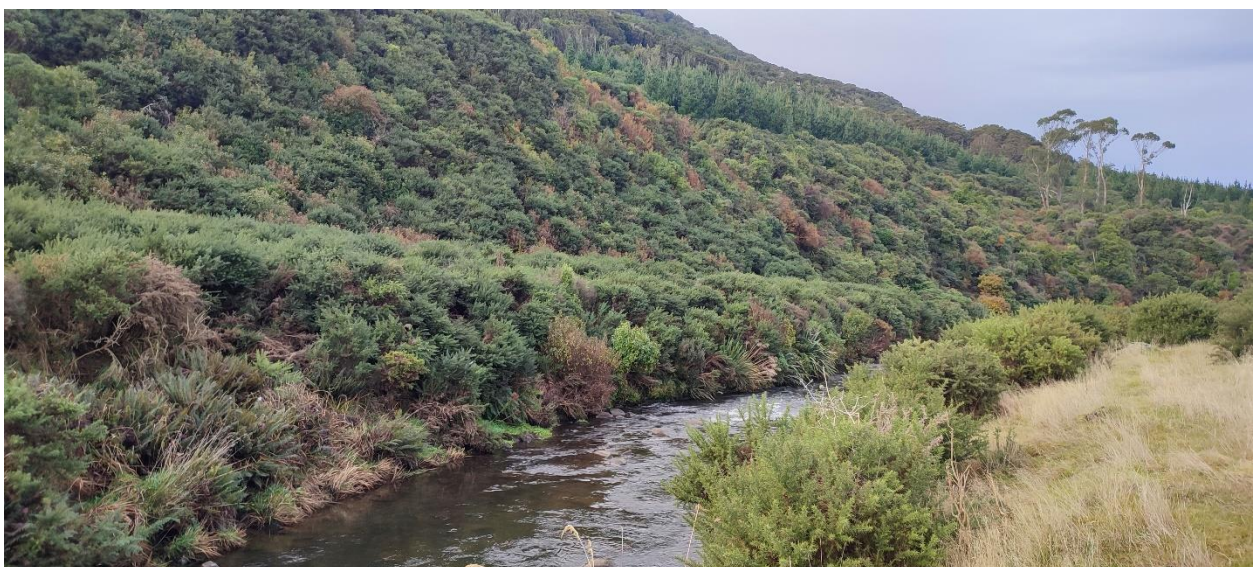


Photo 4: Large gorse infestation on the Catlins mainstem.

Large sections of the river were unable to be surveyed on foot as the gorse growth prevented walking up the river's margin. The high density of gorse is likely to put off all but the keenest anglers. Even so, there were large areas where the gorse had been sprayed and others where it had been cleared. These actions will improve access to the fishery and reduce a source of nitrates to the waterway (Dyck et al., 1983).



Photo 5: Sprayed gorse on the Catlins mainstem, just below the Wairepo Creek confluence.

Wairepo Creek

On the day of the 2023 spawning surveys, Wairepo Creek was low and relatively clear, and it was contributing a little under half of the upper Catlins River flow. The catchment appears to be in good health although some tributaries were found to be grazed more intensively and were contributing silt load to the mainstem Wairepo Creek and likely to the Catlins River.

Around three km upstream of the Catlins confluence, Wairepo Creek opens into a large open peat wetland and splits into three main branches. The southern branch is nearly unsurveyable due to thick riparian vegetation and has a large waterfall roughly 25 metres tall which will block upstream trout passage.



Photo 6: Large waterfall on the upper Wairepo Creek – South branch.

The centre branch of the Wairepo is the largest of the three and heads into well-forested DOC-managed land. The stream has good gravels but is deeply incised throughout the wetland, making surveying difficult. The single redd observed in the centre branch of Wairepo Creek was potentially a misidentification as several potential trout passage barriers were spread throughout the upper catchment.

The North branch is smaller than the centre and has been grazed more heavily than the other two. There was evidence of bank pugging and slumping in the lower reaches. Despite this there appeared to be a range of wetland plant species present.



Photo 7: Stream and bank conditions, Wairepo North branch just above confluence with the mainstem of Wairepo Creek.

Electric Fishing

Brown Trout Catch

Table 4 below shows the electric fishing effort and catch for brown trout in the seven upper Catlins tributaries that were electric fished in 2023. The data suggests that each of the sections that were fished except for Daphne Brook are likely to provide at least a moderate level of recruitment to the main river.

Table 4: Electric fishing catch and effort for seven tributaries of the upper Catlins River.

Water body	Brown trout (BT) caught	Area fished (m ²)	BT per m ²	Fishing Time (mins)	BT per minute
Waikirikiri Stream	7	24	0.29	4.4	1.58
Hermit Stream	15	54	0.28	8.8	1.71
Thisbe Stream	13	60	0.22	5.8	2.25
Chloris Stream	5	60	0.08	3.3	1.50
Catlins River tributary	5	75	0.07	7.1	0.71
Wairepo Creek	7	163	0.04	12.5	0.56
Daphne Brook	1	32	0.03	4.8	0.21

Daphne Brook is likely to be the exception to this, as the stream had high levels of deposited sediment (*Photo 8*), which will have reduced the spawning and rearing potential of the stream.



Photo 8: Daphne Brook survey site. Note dislodged sediment.

Wairepo Creek exhibited relatively low trout densities, both in terms of the number caught per minute and per area. This lower catch rate could be partially attributed to the stream's larger size, which may reduce the overall efficiency of capture. Compared to the other streams surveyed, Wairepo Creek had a higher proportion of runs and pools, as well as relatively large substrate sizes. These characteristics make the stream less suitable as a habitat for juvenile trout.

Brown Trout Size

Figure 15 below shows the distribution of fork lengths caught by electric fishing (n=52).

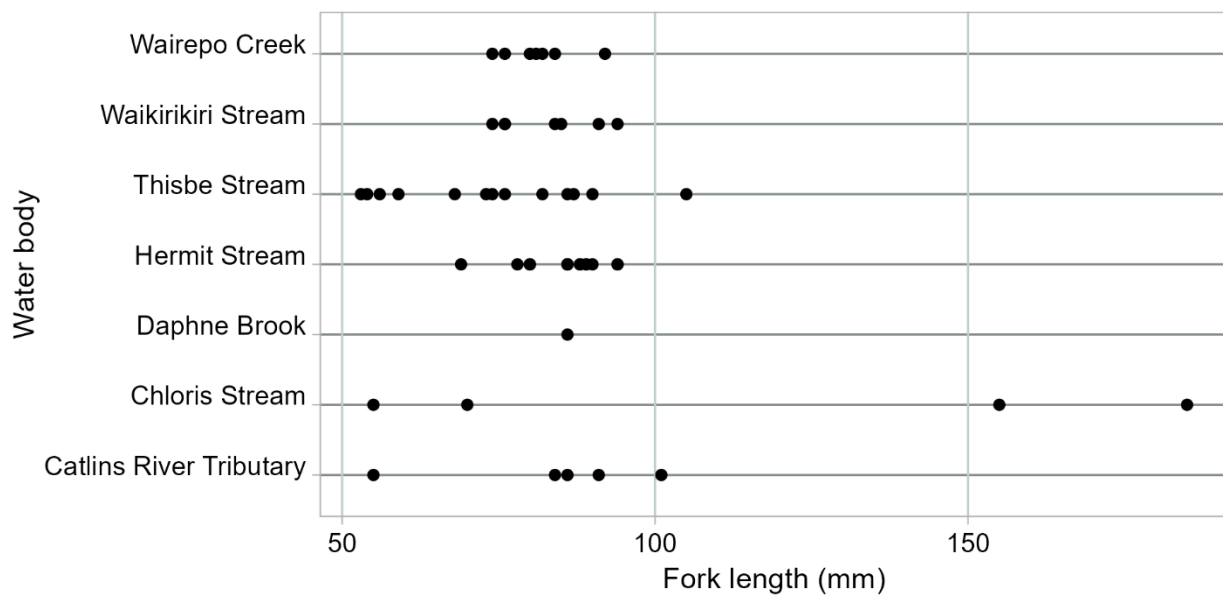


Figure 15: Fork lengths of brown trout caught at each site.

There was found to be a significant difference in length distribution overall ($p=0.008$), between sites the only significant difference was found to be between Waikirikiri Stream and the Catlins River tributary ($p=0.007$). Both differences are probably caused largely by the low sample sizes and may not indicate a true difference.

Species Assemblage

Table 5 below shows the species that were present at each site.

Table 5: Species presence at each site.

Water body	Brown trout	Kōura	Non diadromous galaxiid	Longfin eel	Upland bully
Catlins River tributary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chloris Stream	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Daphne Brook	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hermit Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Thisbe Stream	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Waikirikiri Stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Wairepo Creek	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Most sites contained high species diversity with an average of more than four species found per site.



Photo 9: Capture from single pass electric fishing of Wairepo Creek. Abundant brown trout, koura and non-diadromous galaxiids alongside a small number of upland bullies. Note, longfin eels also found but not pictured.

Brown trout and kōura were found at every site that was fished. Kōura were very abundant in places and there was evidence of reproduction with females in berry (*Photo 10*) and smaller, presumably younger specimens in places.



Photo 10: Large female kōura in berry, caught in Hermit Stream.

Habitat surveys

Figure 16 shows the proportion of each type of flow or mesohabitat at each site.

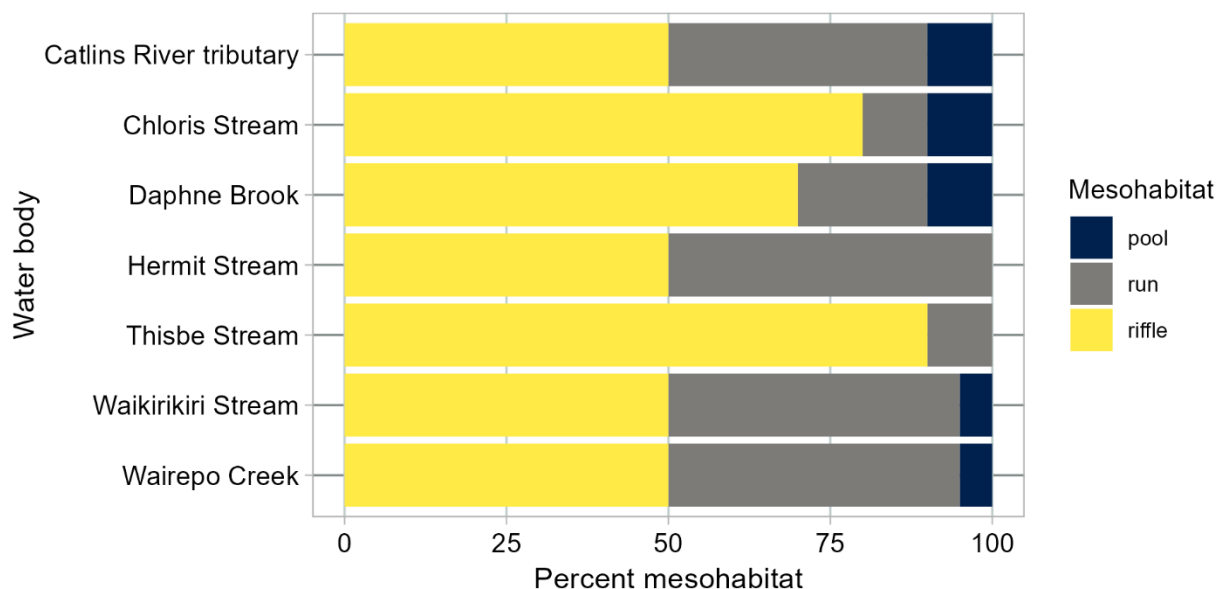


Figure 16: Mesohabitat percentage at each site.

Sites typically had a high proportion of riffle habitat, giving them high potential as spawning streams. This may not be representative of the streams as a whole as each site was located near to Catlins mainstem and it appears bottom reaches of each stream were relatively steep as they cross into the edges of the Catlins flood plain.

The proportion of coverage of different sizes of substrate was also estimated (*Figure 17*). All streams had high levels of gravel, important for spawning, and moderate levels of cobble, providing cover for rearing trout.

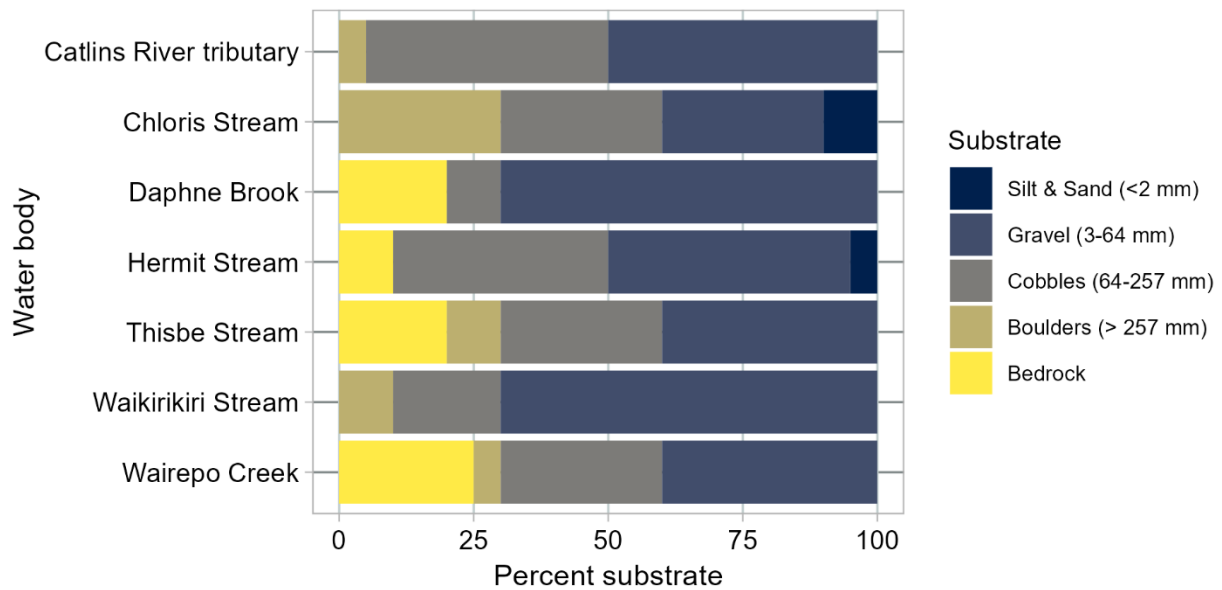


Figure 17: Substrate percent cover at each site.

Invertebrates

Kick net sampling in Wairepo Creek found seven species, *Deleatidium* and *Coloboriscus* mayflies, *Olinga*, *Aoteapyche* and *Hydrobiosid* caddisflies, *Elmid* riffle beetles and *Potamopyrgus* snails. Including kōura in the analysis of Macroinvertebrate Community index (MCI) gives a score of 122.5 which suggests excellent water quality. However, it's important to note that one MCI sample from a single site does not provide conclusive evidence of the overall health of the upper catchment, though it does offer an encouraging snapshot.

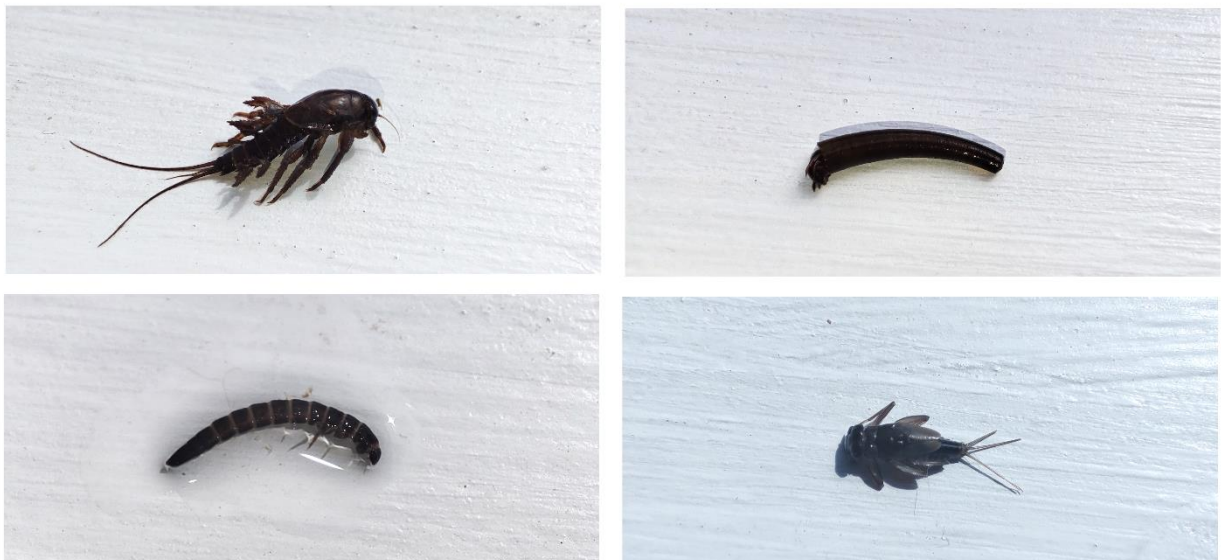


Photo 11: Sensitive species found in Wairepo Creek. Clockwise from top left: *Coloboriscus*, *Olinga*, *Elmidae* and *Deleatidium*.

Discussion

This investigation into the upper catchment of the Catlins River suggests that the upper river is in relatively good health for supporting a trout fishery with most tributaries containing high levels of trout spawning and rearing habitat and moderate amounts of spawning found in both the Catlins mainstem and Wairepo Creek.

The major change in the catchment over the near future is the large-scale conversion to forestry, a significant proportion of the upper Catlins catchment, approximately 5,500 hectares has been purchased by the Ingka Investment group (estimated using GIS) and it is likely that a significant proportion of this will be converted from relatively low stocking rate agriculture to forestry. Indications from the group are that they intend to manage to a very high level environmentally, clearing gorse infestations, and planting and maintaining larger riparian buffer zones than required by law. Pest plant control will be important for the catchment as it appears that weeds are currently being suppressed in places by stock.

The Otago Regional Council recognises various water quality issues in the river as measured at Houipapa near the estuary, when compared to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management bands (Dyer, 2022). These include E. coli levels (B-D band), median dissolved reactive phosphorus (C band), the macroinvertebrate community index (C band), and clarity (D band). While natural tannins affect clarity in the river, a degrading trend has been observed over the past 20 years.

Following a conversion to forestry it is expected there will be improvement in the levels of E Coli and dissolved reactive phosphorus. Improvements in macroinvertebrate indexes and clarity will require good management practices by forestry operators as it is recognised that sediment impacts are generally lessened under forestry relative to agriculture but there can be significant issues, largely when trees are harvested (Fahey et al., 2003). There is potential for some spawning, rearing habitat to be diminished due to a loss of flow when trees become established (Fahey & Jackson, 1997), but this may be made up for by the establishment of large and well planted buffer zones to improve juvenile rearing habitat, particularly if sedimentation is reduced. Previous staff investigations into the catchment found significant management issues with the conversion of small creeks to tile drains and the attempted large-scale drainage of the Cairn Swamp (Trotter, 2008). Reinstatement of the Cairn Swamp wetland would help improve the noted water quality issues.

The Catlins River is a locally important fishery (Otago Fish & Game Council, 2015) that sustains between 900 and 4,500 angler days per year (Stoffels & Unwin, 2023). It is, however, unknown what proportion of Catlins River angling takes place in the upper reaches. One of the key issues facing the upper Catlins River is the poor access provisions to the main river. Legal access to the majority of the Catlins River is good, with legal public roads bordering LINZ hydro parcels in the lower river and DOC-managed land in the middle reaches (Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, accessed November 2023). Investigations for this project into access to the upper river found very poor legal provisions for access and that access relied on the good will of the landowners. It is unusual of a river of this size to have such poor provisions for access. Discussions with anglers that are known to fish the catchment suggests that they are likely to

be inadvertently trespassing. It is suggested that discussions are initiated with the forestry group to improve access, particularly to the 10km stretch between Cairn Road and the confluence of Wairepo Creek as this section has high value as a fishery due to its flow rate and number of deep pools.

Good species diversity, including both native and valued introduced species, was observed in nearly all surveyed tributaries. While the upper reaches of these tributaries weren't specifically examined for species occurrence, the existence of large waterfalls implies that some sections might be free of trout and possibly fish-free. These areas could offer opportunities for native species enhancement projects.

Following on from this report staff intend to initiate discussion with Ingka Investments, with the goal of negotiating ongoing access to the upper river and to collaboration on the ongoing management of the riparian zone. Staff will also provide this report to the Catlins Integrated Catchment Group to highlight Fish & Game focussed issues and opportunities in the upper catchment, notably the maintenance and improvement of riparian access and biodiversity and the restoration of the Cairn Swamp Wetland.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the Ingka Group and their forestry manager, Josh Cairns who provided access to the water ways for spawning surveys, electric fishing and habitat surveying. Thanks also to Drew Couper and Russ Barclay who gave up a sunny weekend to assist with electric fishing and habitat surveying. Thanks also to Peter Ravenscroft and Richard Allibone who provided advice on galaxiid identification.

Recommendations

- 1. That this report is received.***

**Jayde Couper,
Fish & Game Officer
November 2023**

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Appendices

Methods

Electric Fishing and Habitat Surveying

Electric fishing of seven tributaries (*Figure 14*) to the upper Catlins River was conducted on the 4th of February 2023. Sites were chosen where there was easy access, suitable juvenile trout habitat and practical conditions for electric fishing. The sites were all situated close to the confluence with the Catlins River.

Electric fishing was performed using a Smith-Root L24 electric fishing machine. Voltage was customised at each site to optimise between capture efficiency and morbidity/ mortality and ranged from 420-470 volts. Wave form, frequency and duty cycle were held constant between sites, pulsed direct current at 55hz with a duty cycle of 0.2.

Electric fishing consisted of a single pass in a reach that had not been stop netted. Site length and average width were estimated to calculate the area fished and the electric fishing machine recorded “switch on” time to give another index of fishing effort.

Fish were collected using dip nets and a set net where suitable. Fish were anaesthetised using Anqui-s before being counted and measured for length. In addition, trout were weighed. Kōura were not measured or counted and instead their density was estimated using standard NIWA Freshwater fish database terminology of: absent, rare, occasional, common, abundant.

GPS location at the bottom of each section was recorded, and photographs of each end of the reach were taken. Standard electrofishing monitoring forms (obtained from NIWA) were completed, and information on invertebrate communities, substrate condition, riparian cover, and flow levels was documented. These data were subsequently entered into the Fish & Game database, and copies of the forms were sent to NIWA for inclusion in the national database. Invertebrate samples were taken at one site, namely Wairepo Creek.

Due to the relatively low number of samples, differences in the distribution of fish lengths were tested overall using a Kruskal-Wallis test and between sites using a Dunn test with a Bonferroni correction to reduce the risk of type 1 errors.

Spawning

Preliminary bank based spawning surveys were carried out by Officer Dixon on the 17th of May 2022 to determine the practicality of spawning surveys and to inform site selection for the 2023 habitat and electric fishing surveys. Follow up surveys were implemented on the 31st of May 2023 and focussed on Wairepo Creek and the mainstem of the Catlins in three locations (*Figure 14*). Site selection was informed by the electric fishing from earlier in the year and where surveying was deemed to be practical. Spawning surveys recorded, adult brown trout, trout redds (nests), fish passage barriers and general habitat observations.

15.0 General Business

16.00 Annual General Meeting Otago Fish and Game Council

**3pm, Thursday 30th November 2023
To be held at Roxburgh Information Centre,
120 Scotland Street, Roxburgh**

Agenda

- 1. Present**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Approve minutes of 2022 AGM**
- 4. Presentation of 2022/23 Annual Report**
- 5. Questions from the floor**

16.1 Minutes of the AGM - 1st December 2022

Minutes of the Otago Fish & Game Council Annual General Meeting

2:45pm, Thursday 1st December 2022
at Presbyterian Church, 10 Elspeth Street, Cromwell

1. Present

Colin Weatherall (Chair), Mike Barker, Rick Boyd, John Highton, Adrian McIntyre, Blair Trevathan, Vicky May

Present via Zoom: Ray Grubb

In attendance: Ian Hadland (CE), Bruce Quirey (communications officer/minutes secretary), David Priest (Central Otago operations manager)

2. Apologies

Ian Cole, Richard Twining (Ngai Tahu)

3. Presentation of Annual Report

The OF&GC Chair Cr Weatherall opened proceedings by welcoming everyone to the AGM.

The Chair moved

that the Council extend its appreciation to Cr Grubb for the time he had served as a NZC councillor and NZC Chair.

Cr Weatherall thanked Cr Grubb for his work and tireless efforts for the organisation at a national level, and for representing the interests of Otago at every opportunity.

The Chair covered some highlights in his annual report for the year to 31st August 2022.

Licence sales and revenue reported in the financial statement were above normal trends and the surplus had exceeded expectations. He thanked staff and everyone involved.

He said advocacy for the organisation had been demanding but was moving into an even more challenging stage. Fish and Game needed to regain its social licence, which was going to be a critical for the future of the organisation along with the Ministerial Review.

The Lindis High Court decision had not provided many wins but did set a benchmark to review at what point the organisation would take those types of actions.

The organisation was moving towards the line with Contact Energy for the establishment of the Lower Clutha River Trust. The Chair thanked staff and Cr Boyd particularly for governance support in that project.

A milestone had been undertaken with iwi, in particular a Council meeting at Hokonui Runanga. The Council looked forward to meeting with other runanga. The Chair extended the Council's best wishes to Ngai Tahu representative Richard Twining for his health and wellbeing, and looked forward to his return.

The proposed amalgamation of some Fish and Game regions was progressing. However, Otago had a future as its own identity, alongside Southland and CSI regions. The organisation was committed to maintaining and improving its standing in relation to that work.

The Chair said he believed sincerely that the organisation's relationship with the farming and rural community had continued to improve through consultation, participation and working together on projects. Through goodwill, OF&GC was making steady progress. He thanked governors and staff for their part in a change of focus to improve relationships, which assisted efforts towards supporting the organisation's social licence.

He thanked Mr Hadland and his team, welcoming Central Otago operations manager David Priest and noting other new appointees. He was pleased to indicate the Otago staff environment was in good heart. He said the Council had taken a responsible approach towards caring for its staff.

He said it was a pleasure to have another clean audit report. The reporting was focused not only on financials but on activities and outputs. It was important to keep the organisation's credibility and performance at the highest level.

The Chair thanked staff, honorary rangers and councillors for their contribution.

Moved (Cr Trevathan /Cr McIntyre)

That the 2021/22 Annual Report be adopted.

Carried unanimously

The Chair thanked the Council for its assistance while he provided governance support at CSI Fish and Game Council for the past six months. The CSI role had been extended to February next year and he looked forward to returning to focus on Otago matters.

Fish and Game region chairs were meeting monthly and were focused on the way forward and amalgamations.

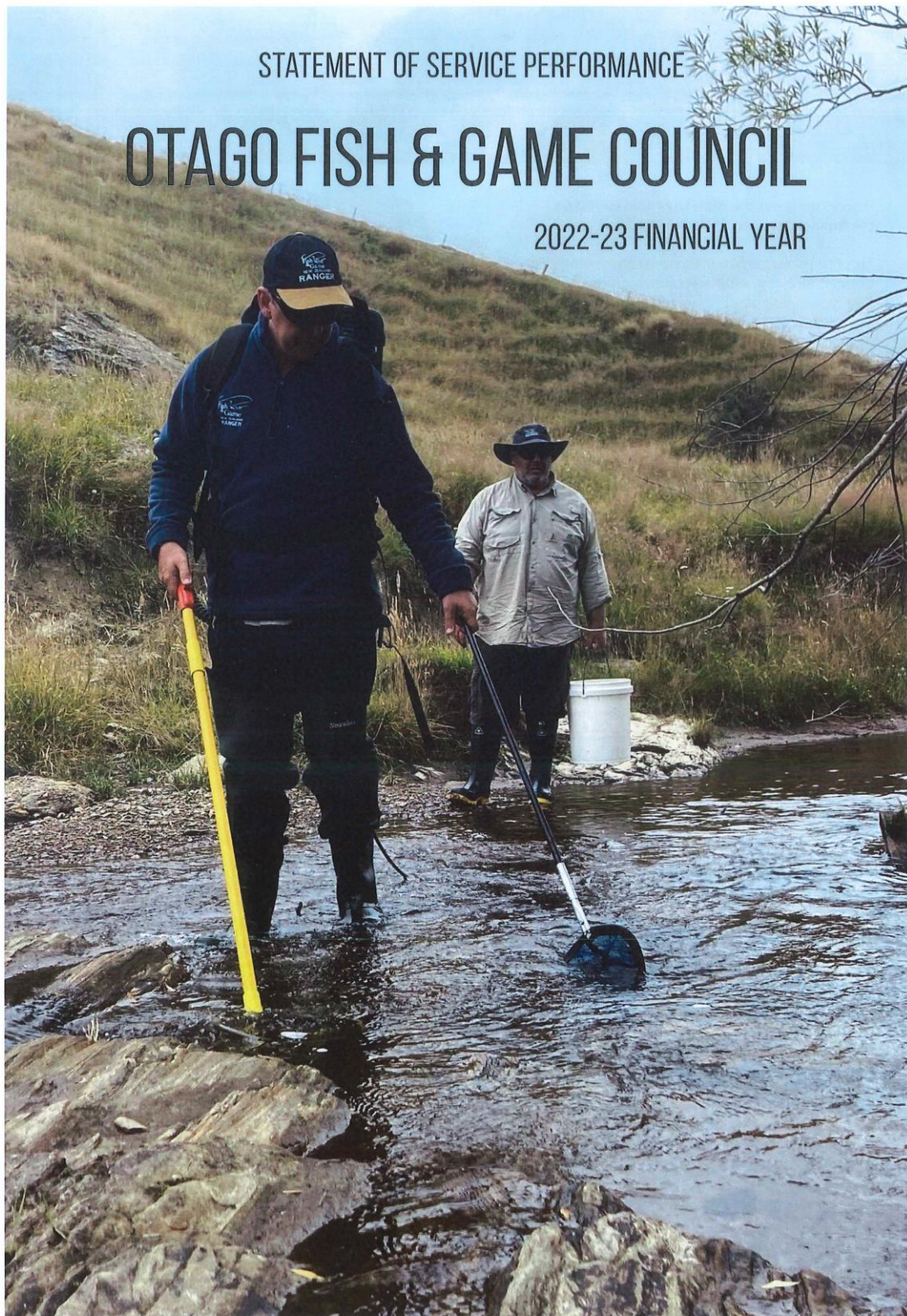
Cr Grubb said Otago was an important council with a Chair that understood governance. The organisation should be grateful for people of Cr Weatherall's calibre. The Ministerial Review said governance was the single biggest weakness in Fish and Game and the organisation was identifying and addressing areas for improvement.

4. Questions from the floor

There were no members of the public in attendance.

The Chair thanked everyone for their involvement and declared the AGM closed at 3.08pm.

16.2 Draft Annual Statement of Service Performance Report 2022-2023





Chairs' Report

It gives me great pleasure to report to you on the financial year to 31 August 2023.

This brings an end to our three-year planning cycle of Council. Nobody could have anticipated the impact the Covid pandemic would have on the strategic objectives set at the 2019 planning meeting but the organisation has carefully navigated this disruptive period and delivered much of what was intended, albeit under trying circumstances. I'm proud of the way the Council and staff have worked positively and practically to ensure licence holders get the service they expect from us.

The financial position of Council also remains healthy. Fishing licence sales volumes in Otago were behind the ambitious budget set by New Zealand Council but still held up revenue, even though the country was in a technical recession. Game bird licence sales were also steady. Our total licence income was \$2,337,695, which was ahead of budgeted sales revenue and better than last year's total revenue (\$2,101,439). We paid levies of \$1,200,082 to the New Zealand Fish & Game Council, up from \$959,241 the previous year. The Otago Fish & Game Council's end-of-year position was a deficit of \$83,890 which was better than the budgeted deficit expected of \$100,622. The deficit was planned by Council to spend down reserves to fund specific projects. This is a good result under the circumstances.

Angler and hunter compliance was of a high standard this year and while we didn't quite achieve our target contact rates, I want to thank our honorary ranger team for the effort they put in and particularly the support they have given staff in field projects over the year.

Advocating for better ecological health in waterways, wetlands and habitat through RMA processes remains a major workload. Staff have attended stakeholder meetings, made submissions and appeared before hearings on the Otago Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and the Land and Water Regional Plan. The quality of the staff submissions has been excellent and really does reflect the values important to Otago licence holders.

One of the highlights over the year was the very positive results in our stakeholder survey. The Council has invested additional resources into communication and strategic relationships and the results clearly show that this is paying off. The report, written by a third-party provider, confirmed our positive and growing working relationships with key parties, particularly mana whenua. However, there is still work to do and the Council and staff will build the recommendations into a communications and engagement plan this coming year.



Colin Weatherall QSM

Chairman,
Otago Fish & Game Council

Staff continued to work with Contact Energy during the year to improve their sports fish mitigation programme on the lower Clutha River. The development of a trust to better coordinate Contact's Sports Fish Management Programme has been signed by our Councillor trustees and now awaits signatures from Contact Energy following staff approval of the funding agreement. Next year should see the trust come into fruition and progress on sports fish projects, including investigations, and hopefully, confirmation of construction of a salmon hatchery at Roxburgh to improve sea-run salmon returns into the Clutha River.

Stormwater management on the boundary of the former Wanaka Hatchery site continues to frustrate the Council with discharges of stormwater into Bullock Creek headwaters and onto Fish & Game property. The Queenstown Lakes District Council deferred its stormwater upgrade, to help address their situation, a decision which disappointed our Council. Legal advice recently sought should help progress the matter in the new financial year.

More positively, the Council was successful in obtaining a Queen Elizabeth II open space covenant over the Bullock Creek Hatchery Springs wetland area, which will protect the sensitive urban spring headwater area from development in perpetuity. Again, our thanks must go to the Friends of Bullock Creek, who continue to champion this important spawning stream and are doing a fantastic job of removing weeds and planting the wetland springs area on our property.

I would like to thank our chief executive and staff, councillors, our New Zealand Council appointee Mike Barker, and our co-opted Ngai Tahu member Richard Twining for their hard work and support over the year, especially while I have also been supporting Central South Island Fish & Game Council at the start of the year. We look forward to a positive 2024.

Colin Weatherall, Chair

Who is Otago Fish & Game Council?



Who are we?

Otago Fish & Game Council is an independent crown entity with nine staff, nine governors and 16 volunteer rangers. The current Chair is Colin Weatherall QSM.

Why do we exist?

Otago Fish & Game Council is the statutory manager of sports fish and game bird resources within Otago Region. It holds functions and responsibilities set out in the Conservation Act 1987. The organisation's functions include managing, maintaining and enhancing the sports fish and game resources of Otago in the long-term recreational interests of anglers and hunters; representing the interests and aspirations of anglers and hunters in the statutory planning process; and advocating the interests of the Council, including its interests in the habitats of sports fish and game birds.

Links:

- [Conservation Act 1987](#)
- [Otago Region homepage on F&GNZ website](#)

What we aim to do

Conservation and Sustainability:

Conserve and manage Otago's freshwater fisheries and game bird populations. Work to ensure that these resources are sustainable and healthy for future generations to enjoy.

Recreational Opportunities:

Provide recreational opportunities for anglers and hunters. Manage and maintain access to public fishing and hunting areas in Otago, ensuring that these activities can be enjoyed by all New Zealanders and visitors.

Advocacy:

Advocate for the interests of recreational anglers and hunters. We represent the concerns and preferences of licence holders in regulatory and policy decisions related to fisheries and game bird management, and the habitat which supports them.

Research and Education:

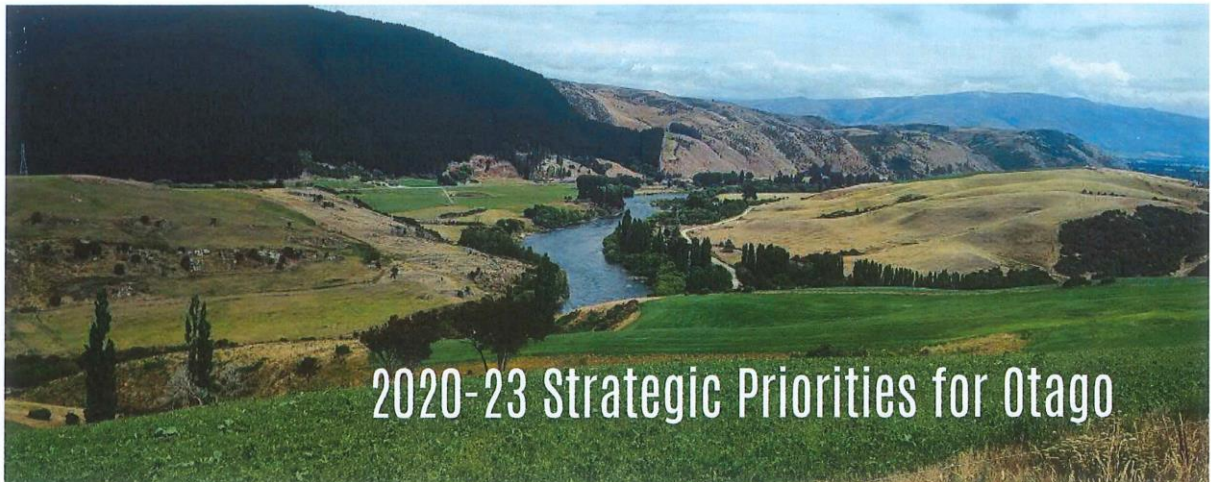
Conduct research and monitoring of fish and game populations and habitats, which helps inform management decisions. Engage in educational efforts to promote responsible and sustainable angling and hunting practices.

Regulation and Licensing:

Issue fishing and hunting licences and collect revenue to fund management and its operations. We communicate with licence holders regularly and enforce regulations to ensure that recreational activities are conducted in a sustainable and lawful manner.

Environmental Stewardship:

In addition to a focus on fish and game species, we work on broader environmental issues related to freshwater ecosystems, including wetlands, as their health is essential for the well-being of all species.



The Otago Fish & Game Council developed a set of strategic priorities at its February 2020 meeting. The goal and priorities were reconfirmed at the February 2022 planning meeting and an annual operations workplan was generated to achieve those outcomes.

GOAL:

To manage, maintain and enhance Otago sports fish and game birds and their habitats in the best long-term interests of present and future generations of anglers and hunters



Public Awareness and Strategic Relationships

Improved understanding by the general public of F&G role and work

Form alliances/collaborations with landowners, mana whenua and other stakeholders on areas of common interest

Links:

- [Otago Operational Workplan 2022-2023](#)
- [Otago Strategic Priorities 2020-2023](#)



Species Management

That Otago Fish & Game Council has sufficient understanding of Southern Lakes sports fish populations to meet management needs



Habitat Protection and Management

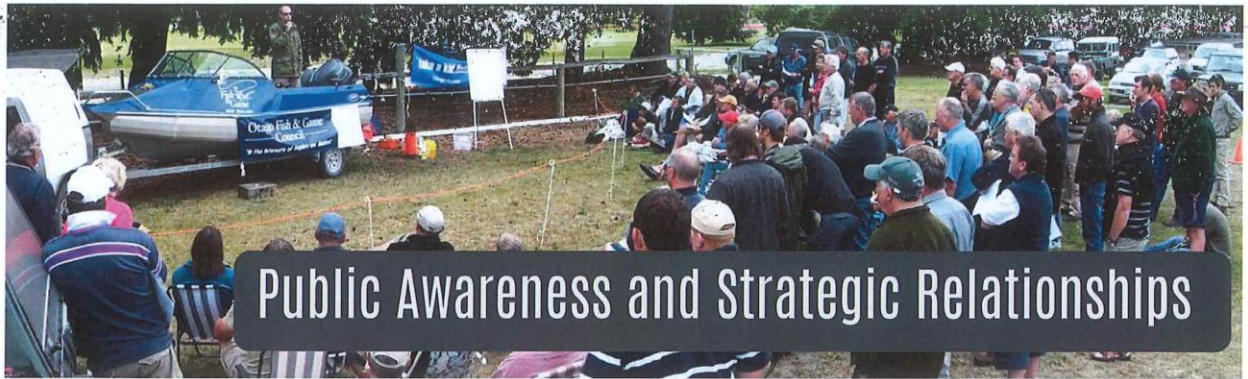
Improve outcomes in Resource Management planning processes – Plans reflect Fish & Game input



Licence holder Communication

High licence holder understanding of F&G organisation and its work on their behalf





Public Awareness and Strategic Relationships

Public Awareness

The delay in the organisation's communications strategy (deferred to 2023/24 financial year) didn't discourage staff from engaging with the general public and media across a number of channels.

Generating print and mainstream online media content is one of the primary vehicles for communicating with the general public. In addition there were editorial pieces in the Otago Daily Times.

Social media, mainly Facebook, has provided a useful two-way channel to communicate with both licence holders and members of the public. That is a growing medium.

MEDIA BY THE NUMBERS	2023	2022
Media releases generated	63	56
Print media appearances	106	113
Facebook page followers	3751	3061
Facebook posts	177	190

Stakeholder Perceptions Survey

To stay relevant and be more effective, the organisation needed to measure and understand how we were perceived by stakeholders. A qualitative research study was completed by independent consultant Primary Purpose and consisted of in-depth interviews and online surveys from a wider group. Among the survey participants were representatives from angling and hunting groups, farming, iwi, NGOs, researchers and local government.

Otago Fish & Game Council received very positive ratings for the way it engages and works with other stakeholder organisations. We were described as "pragmatic, responsive and open to other perspectives".

75%

of respondents said they felt positively about how Otago Fish & Game was engaging and working with their organisation.



Donald Scott Memorial Fund Launch

Otago Fish & Game supported the launch of a fund dedicated to freshwater and sports fish research. Dr Scott was a past councillor and would be pleased to see us making a \$5,000 annual contribution to support masters students researching areas of direct interest to the organisation.

Links:

- [Otago Fish & Game Council Facebook Page](#)
- [Stakeholder Perceptions survey](#)
- [Editorial Content](#)

Most stakeholders understood our main role, although a few knew less about its environmental and habitat protection work. Otago Fish & Game received a high rating for its efforts to encourage recreational participation, such as Take A Kid Fishing.

The few poorer ratings in the survey came from online survey participants who had much less direct contact with the organisation. Some thought Otago Fish & Game knew when to be assertive but "could potentially pick its battles a bit more".

The findings, including the critical feedback, will help develop a communications strategy to keep improving our advocacy and how we engage with stakeholders.



Southern Lakes fisheries a focus

According to the National Angler Survey, lakes Wanaka, Hawea, Dunstan and Wakatipu rank in the top five angling destinations in Otago. Accordingly, the Council's medium-term objective is to establish a robust monitoring system for the lakes fisheries with enough sensitivity to detect long-term population changes.

Regular angler surveys are also undertaken at Southern Lakes on a rotational basis. The first of three years of angler surveys to gather effort and catch data for Lake Hawea was completed. 196 angler surveys were done in 36 visits to the lake. The average catch rate was 2.9 hours/fish. By way of comparison, Lake Wanaka was 7.13 hours/fish.

In addition to lake surveys, work on identification of key spawning tributaries, particularly for landlocked salmon, was initiated in the lake Wanaka and Wakatipu catchments. Finding salmon spawning in thousands of hectares of often remote backcountry terrain is no easy task so staff welcomed the use of eDNA technology to help narrow the focus for on-the-ground surveys. Of significance was that foot surveys identified salmon spawning in a Makarora side stream, which was the first documented in a Lake Wanaka tributary for a decade.

One project not completed was the hosting of a lakes fisheries monitoring workshop in Wanaka. A similar event on monitoring southern lakes health was conducted by the Otago Regional Council (ORC) so F&G staff attended that event and are now on an ORC lake health monitoring working party.

In summary, this year's work continues to build the organisation's understanding of these fisheries, which are critically important to anglers and the wider community. All three of these major projects, including the acoustic monitoring, are to be continued in the 2023/24 financial year.

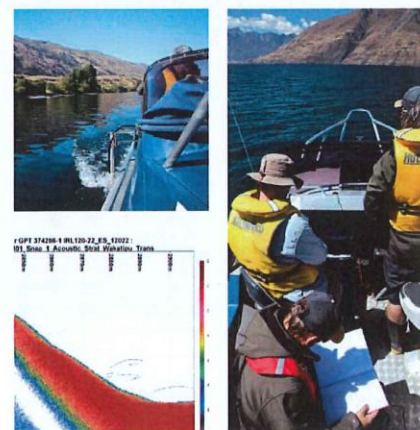
Links:

- [National Angler Survey 2021/22](#)
- [Niwa Report on Acoustic Monitoring of Southern Lakes](#)
- [Hawea Angler Survey Report 2023](#)
- [Landlocked Salmon spawning surveys 2023](#)

Species Management

Acoustic Monitoring at Southern Lakes

Establishing a fit-for-purpose monitoring system for sports fish in Southern Lakes took a significant step forward this year. NIWA were contracted to undertake acoustic surveying using high definition sonar to detect fish. Staff supported NIWA to undertake the repeat surveys of sports fish populations in lakes Wanaka, Wakatipu, Hawea and Dunstan. Results showed there was a decline in the number of fish recorded per hectare in Lakes Wanaka and little change in Hawea since 2009 but an improvement was noted in Lake Wakatipu over the time period. Lake Dunstan was also surveyed in 2023 but repeat surveys of this lake were not recommended due to bubbles from sediments and decaying material interfering with sonar efficacy.



Habitat Protection and Management

RMA Policy and Planning

The Council's primary aim was to improve the outcomes from our statutory involvement in Resource Management Act (RMA) planning and consenting matters.

Meaningful measurement of the impact of this sort of RMA advocacy is problematic. Firstly the policy or plan changes happen over several financial years and, secondly, it is difficult to measure how our advocacy influenced the final outcome, especially when neither plan has been finalised yet. Given the complexity of the process and the lack of a suitable metric, it is appropriate to simply just record our effort and cost.

Making submissions and attending RMA hearings has been a large body of work this last year, which was exacerbated by the simultaneous development of an Otago Regional Policy Statement and a Land and Water Regional Plan. This stretched the organisation's staff resources, and external planning and legal assistance was required to improve the prospects of a good outcome for the species and habitat. Contractors were funded (\$33,255) from Reserves, which Otago set aside in 2020 for the purpose.



The Upper Clutha River, which is the subject of a RMA consent application for suction dredging, is a highly productive fishery and is especially attractive to youth anglers.

Resource Consents

The RMA consent application workload continues to diminish as Otago Regional Council (ORC) plan changes take effect. This has been especially noticeable around water allocation consents as these are now managed with standard conditions (to protect flows) and fixed terms by ORC staff meaning little F&G input is required.

RMA CONSENTS	2023	2022
Total received	30	31
Affected Party approval given (with conditions)	20	21
Submissions made	4	3
Hearings attended	0	3

Two major consent applications are noteworthy.

- An application by Cold Gold Ltd to operate a dredge in the Upper Clutha River channel was opposed due to the potential disturbance of spawning sports fish and rearing habitat. Staff will likely have to prepare for a hearing in the new financial year unless resolved by way of conditions.
- An application by Aotearoa Anglers to run commercial activities (drift boating) on the surface of waterbodies in Central Otago resulted in a negotiated outcome and affected party approval was eventually given by OF&GC. Conditions included limiting the number of boats, trips and timing to reduce the impact on other anglers.

Links:

- [Submission to Draft Otago Land and Water Plan](#)
- [Submission on Otago Regional Policy Statement](#)
- [Further Submission on Otago Regional Policy Statement](#)

Licence Holder Communication



Connecting with licence holders

Improving the knowledge of the organisation and its work among licence holders has been a priority for Council since 2021 survey results reported decreasing levels of understanding about the Council's activities. A specialist communications officer role was established, which has helped considerably with the volume and quality of material reaching licence holders.

The Fish & Game magazine remains the primary vehicle for distribution of information to licence holders. 11,679 fishing and 4344 game licence holders were posted the F&G magazine, which contained 8 pages of dedicated Otago material.

Emailed weekly river reports were instigated this year following 2022 survey results showing that licence holders preferred a direct feed of information to their inboxes. The report containing information on river condition and fishing tips was sent to 13,940 people and has an average 49% open rate. This, alongside monthly ezines, has provided an additional channel to showcase the organisations' activities.

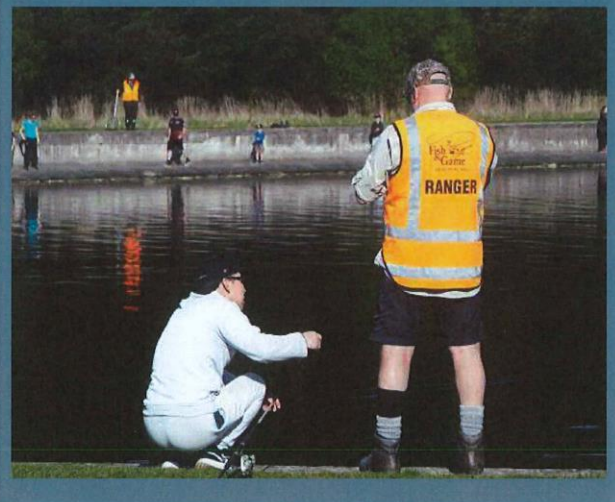
A further opportunity for direct contact with licence holders is through compliance activity. Taking that into account, staff and volunteers had face-to-face contact with 1877 (17%) whole season fish licence holders and 377 (10%) game bird licence holders in the field – each encounter being a prime opportunity to share information.

Links:

- [Otago Fish & Game Council Facebook Page](#)
- [Weekly river reports for anglers](#)
- [Fish & Game Magazine](#)
- [Compliance Summary Report 2022/23](#)

Volunteer Rangers

At year end Otago had 16 volunteer rangers (up from 12 in 2022). This group of dedicated individuals contributed to angler training days, coordinated compliance activities and also did their own self-directed ranging. They accounted for 156 angler and hunter interviews in Otago and many more in support of staff doing compliance work. Their generous assistance with novice angler events such as Take A Kid Fishing days was also appreciated.



Communications Strategy delayed

A formal communications strategy was to be developed in 2022/23 but was not completed, however, staff made contributions to a national communications strategy, which can be adapted and adopted locally.



Changes in spending

There were three notable changes in expenditure between this financial year and the last:

- The increase in spending in the **Species Management** area was primarily related to increased staff hours and external costs associated with the Southern Lakes acoustic survey project.
- **Public Interface** was given greater emphasis in 2022/23, particularly in staff time, as a result of surveys which suggested that we needed to be more visible in the field.
- The **Compliance** output spending was more than the previous year due to higher than expected prosecution costs.



Output	2023	2022
Species Management	\$306,270	\$230,511
Habitat Protection and Management	\$412,597	\$433,754
Angler and Hunter Participation	\$162,568	\$149,285
Public Interface	\$159,368	\$116,731
Compliance	\$125,342	\$87,363
Licencing	\$111,632	\$105,320
Council	\$66,149	\$63,916
Planning and Reporting	\$104,498	\$93,820



Fish & Game Otago staff electric fishing Back Stream as part of a research project funded by Contact Energy to determine the natal origin of lower Clutha River adult brown trout.



Links:

- [2022/23 Otago F&G Council Financial Report](#)
- [Otago F&G Council Agendas and Minutes](#)