

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY
16 FEBRUARY 2016 AT 3.05PM AT UPPER HUTT COSMOPOLITAN CLUB, 11 LOGAN STREET,
UPPER HUTT

1. **Present:**

Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Jim Cook, Paul Shortis, Simon Muckley,
Andrew Morris, Dan Waechter, Andy Tannock, Don Scott, Marc Flaws, Brad
Johnson, Malcolm Francis, Chris O'Meara

2. **In Attendance:**

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Steve Pilkington, Hamish Carnachan

Licenceholders: Rob Hazelwood

3. **Apologies:**

No apologies

4. **Conflicts of Interest**

A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of Interest.
No new conflicts of interest were declared.

5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting of 8 December 2015**

After brief discussion it was moved that:

***the Minutes of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 8 December 2015 be
approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.***

Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara

Carried

It was then moved that the

***The Minutes of the public-excluded session of the Wellington Fish & Game
Council of 8 December 2015 be approved as a true and correct record of the
proceedings of that meeting***

Andrew Morris/Simon Muckley

Carried

6. **Matters Arising**

Mr Teal provided a review of the Action List including options available for co-
opting members whereby under the Wellington Fish & Game Council rules
(section 1.11) and authorised under the Conservation Act 1987 section 26E there
is power to co-opt members to Council.

It was the moved that

Eric Neumann be co-opted onto Wellington Fish & Game Council under Wellington Fish & Game Council rule section 1.11 and authorised under the Conservation Act 1987 section 26E.

Chris O'Meara/Malcolm Francis

Carried

It was agreed that this would be subject to Eric Neumann's approval.

Mr Teal indicated that there was a potential for Wellington Fish & Game Council meeting and the second day of the Fish & Game Managers' meeting in August to coincide. After brief discussion it was moved that

The Wellington Fish & Game Council meeting scheduled for 16 August 2016 would be rescheduled for Tuesday 23 August 2016.

Strato Cotsilinis/Jim Cook

Carried

Councillor Tannock noted that information on the income base for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp programme would be provided for the Wellington Fish & Game Council meeting in April to support a remit for potentially increasing the stamp contribution for each licence. It was agreed that Mr Teal would write a letter to NZ Fish & Game Council for their March meeting expressing the Wellington F&GC's request for this option to be given consideration. Mr Teal was also requested to circulate information on income derived from the stamp on the licence and the principle of increasing the contribution to other regions. Mr Teal was also requested to alert other regional managers of the concept at the upcoming Managers Meeting in February.

Mr Carnachan provided an update of the curriculum development project to support the Fish in Schools project currently being undertaken in at least four regions. He outlined that Lift Education had provided a quote of \$15,000 for material adapted from a Canadian programme which would provide a web-based output. Discussion ensued on how angling clubs could contribute to the education function which would leverage off the Children's Fish Out Day activities.

7. Public Participation

Chairman Cotsilinis welcomed members of the public and offered an opportunity to address Council on any issues. No specific issues were discussed.

8. NZ Council Business

Councillor Morris confirmed that there had not been a NZ Council meeting since the last Wellington F&G Council meeting, but outlined some activities that occurred since that meeting.

Councillor Morris noted that the public awareness concerning the stock in waterways at Lake Taylor had been considerable and highlighted the successful use of social media as a communications channel to the wider public.

Chairman Cottilinis noted that it appeared that Otago Regional Council were not automatically identifying Fish & Game or Department of Conservation as 'interested parties' in relation to consent processing relating to waterways. It was also noted that NIWA had completed their final independent sampling of invertebrates and water quality on the Ruamahanga River, which would now be undertaken by the Greater Wellington Regional Council in-house thereby increasing their sphere of influence of information collection.

9. Recommendations for the 2016 Game Season

Discussion ensued on the telephone conference call conducted on 1 February 2016 after which it was moved

That the notes from the teleconference held on 1 February 2016 were a true and correct record of discussions.

Chris O'Meara/Marc Flaws

Carried

Discussion ensued on the supporting information that the El Nino event had been less severe as predicted, and that the birds were mobile during late summer when it was expected to get drier. It was then moved that

the additional game season recommendations be made to the Minister of Conservation for the 2016 Game Season be confirmed (in addition to those recommendations decided at the 8 December 2015 meeting):

mallard - eight week season and eight bird limit;

black swan - eight week season and three bird limit across the region;

paradise shelduck – ten week season and eight bird limit across the region, and no 2017 summer season.

Andy Tannock/Marc Flaws

Carried

Council discussed correspondence from licenceholder Neil Hayes regarding season conditions. It was agreed to invite Mr Hayes to the next Council meeting in Masterton to provide an opportunity to clarify ideas and opinions held. Discussion ensued on the issues highlighted by Mr Hayes including: Continued use of steel shot as non-toxic shot – with it pointed out that it was the Government's decision to move to non-toxic (steel) shot and Fish & Game's influence was primarily related to introduction of regulations; His assertions that numbers of mallards were declining – it was pointed out that mortality from environmental influences, mortality by predators, and habitat changes are the focus for current mallard research that are more likely to be principal drivers of population change.

10. Proposal to Farm Grass and Silver Carp

Chairman Cottilinis gave an overview of the order of events regarding an application to farm grass carp and silver carp near Taupo with a view for live trade in Auckland. He noted that there was a public notice in early November 2015 in the Dominion Post (as a paper with a national distribution on Saturday) with no local Taupo papers being provided with the notice. The application had been sent to iwi, DoC, and Eastern Fish & Game Council and advice was also sought from Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council. Those Fish & Game regions had not approved the application based on legal requirements being met but had also not opposed it, and the application was subsequently sent through to the Minister of Conservation for approval which was confirmed in early January 2016 subject to comment from local iwi. Since it has been made public there have been concerns raised by angling clubs relating to exact numbers of fish to be transferred, any potential for escape when transported, and potential for live carp sales to spread widely. Discussion amongst Council considered that once a commercial value had been placed on live sales of fish, then there could be wider implications of fish farming for all regions including trout in freshwater and saline situations. The assessment of risk of these particular species was considered by some to be low, given their number and lack of propensity to breed in the wild. However, there were concerns that the process had not provided an opportunity for wider discussion - other than this particular proposal – to consider more generic implications of effects of wider distribution on pond/wetland quality, and the potential for commercialisation of fish farms in New Zealand.

It was moved that

Wellington Fish & Game Council send a letter to NZ Fish & Game Council requesting them to examine the process by which grass carp and silver carp were authorised without wider consultation for rearing and transfer from Taupo to Auckland markets. Wellington Council would also express concerns that this approval could lead to farming freshwater fish on a wider scale, and that wider discussion of these issues beyond the region(s) in question is warranted - and that there may be unintended consequences of approvals considered on an adhoc basis

Malcolm Francis/Don Scott

Carried

11. Potential Use of Felt Soled Boots

Councillor Scott provide an overview of a discussion paper on the potential for anglers to be able to use felt soled boots. He considered there was little evidence that proliferation of didymo had been caused by felt-soled boots compared with other gear and that anglers had been singled out unfairly for a restriction. Discussion ensued on the following subjects:

- Reasons for didymo's absence in the North Island are not fully understood (potentially water chemistry from geological make up of river beds, latitude, river disturbance frequency, or biosecurity measures);
- A precautionary approach was preferred by most Councillors;
- Safety concerns in using rubber soled boots was potentially overstated;

- Felt soled shoes had been shown to be difficult to dry out and therefore were at greater risk to harbour didymo;
- Can't necessarily control other potential vectors that can also cause spread (such as bird movement);
- Most anglers had adapted to using different gear.

It was then moved that

Wellington Fish & Game Council reaffirms its continued support for restriction of use of felt soled boots, acknowledging that it was discriminatory against some anglers but a precautionary approach was preferred.

Strato Cotsilinis /Paul Shortis

Carried

12. Canada Goose Management

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the background of Canada goose management in recent years – following the removal from the Wildlife Schedule as a game bird – and subsequently where landowners in the South Island, Wairarapa, and northern North Island had been undertaking 'control' of numbers of liberal use of hunting opportunities and/or helicopter culls. There was little information on the effectiveness of the helicopter culls or the level of compliance with health and safety requirements or any specific conditions such as picking up dead carcasses.

Discussion ensued on:

- Costs associated with keeping to prescribed levels;
- Hasn't affected hunters ability to hunt in most circumstances;
- Questions on what conditions were imposed on large scale helicopter culls – permissions sought and given, picking up carcasses, use of lead shot;
- Fish & Game had successfully managed to a 4000 bird limit;
- Actions of local landowners in not picking up birds from recent cull in January will not reflect well in public opinion;
- If a perceived problem gets too big then Fish & Game may then be requested to assist but may be a Government funded project

It was moved that

Staff request information from Department of Conservation on the plan and procedures approved for the cull operation on Lake Wairarapa and surrounds, including specific conditions and consultation with interested parties such as iwi

Marc Flaws/Andrew Morris

Carried

Mr Teal was also requested to request information from Fish & Game regions about what is happening to goose numbers in their region and any specific

conditions such as lead shot use were begin permitted in control operation on public land.

13. Planned Rangitikei River Research Projects

Mr Teal provided an overview of the progress made on the Upper/Mid Rangitikei River otolith microchemistry study and the proposed Rangitikei River study regarding potential drivers for differences in aquatic macroinvertebrates biomass and trout numbers.

After discussion it was moved that

Funding from the Rangitikei River Dedicated Reserve be confirmed for the continuance of the Otolith Microchemistry Study, and for a contribution towards costs of up to \$5000 for an international researcher to investigate environmental drivers in macroinvertebrate biomass and trout numbers.

Malcolm Francis/Dan Waechter

Carried

14. Wairarapa Water Use Project Update

Mr Teal provided an overview of the planned project streams being undertaken by project directors (GANT Chart on their website) indicating that there has been no abatement in managing the project to 'investment ready' going beyond an objective feasibility study. There was a risk that the project would get so far advanced it becomes a fait accompli that environmental effects may not be adequately assessed during any feasibility study or consenting processes. Mr Teal informed Council that a meeting had been organised for early March with the WWUP project director and senior GWRC manager to discuss issues relating to the project. He indicated he would also seek Chairman Cotsilinis' presence at the meeting. Concern was expressed that GWRC and WWUP project managers were still overtly advocating for the project rather than providing objective assessment of project feasibility.

15. Lake Wairarapa Update

Mr Carnachan noted that the boards were placed in the weir on the Otukura Stream and appears to be successful in maintaining pond water level heights at about 15cm below maximum for mid-February conditions.

16. Junior Novice Angling/Hunting Programme Update

Mr Carnachan provided an update of the Fish In Schools project and the curriculum development being undertaken by Lift Education and he had taken an initial lead role in liaising with them for other regions. The project had been supported by three Fish & Game regions and NZ F&G Council and required confirmation of funding (\$2,500) from Wellington F&G Council.

It was moved that

Wellington Fish & Game Council would contribute up to \$2,500 to the development of website based curriculum support in conjunction with other regions and NZ F&GC

Andrew Morris/ Brad Johnson

Carried

Mr Teal informed Council that two extra chiller units had been purchased from supplier which would be used to add two additional school sites into the programme. As part of the strategy to introduce additional units into schools in the region, it was planned to liaise with Manawatu and Kapiti angling clubs who had expressed an interest in supporting the programme. It was agreed to formalise this arrangement moving forward before shipments of ova arrive in late April/May.

17. Mallard Research Update

Mr Teal noted that the mallard research project had progressed well this year which up to 60 hens being radio tagged in Southland and Waikato regions. Councillor Tannock had received a recent update from researchers indicated that the breeding season went on for longer this year, but there was not much difference between the years data for Waikato (5% better result in survivorship) but better in Southland (50% better result in survivorship). He noted that the analysis of data starts in earnest but initial take home messages were to target a whole suite of predators.

18. One Plan Implementation

Mr Teal gave an overview of correspondence sent to Horizons Regional Council in December 2015 regarding seeking information on the implementation of the One Plan Regional Plan and why they undertook certain approaches to implementation but had yet to receive a reply.

19. Management Report 1 December 2015 – 31 January 2016

Mr Teal noted that the diligent efforts by staff in undertaking the summer fieldwork programme which was endorsed by Council. He specifically noted:

- Banding programme and attempts to establish additional sites in the Wairarapa;
- January waterfowl counts were completed and presented for consideration in the game season recommendations paper;
- Currently updating the Trout Resource Inventory on spawning sites to identify sites for regional plan advocacy and identify future work programmes;
- The second generation Action Plan for the Manawatu River was to be released shortly;
- Staff had started an inventory of maimais and structures on Wairarapa wetlands;
- Attended a predator control initiative that various stakeholders are considering for the wider Wairarapa

After discussion it was moved that

The management report for 1 December 2015 – 31 January 2016 be received.

Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara

Carried

20. Fishing Licence Report

Mr Teal noted that licence sales on LEQs (full licence equivalents) was lower than the two previous years and was relatively consistent across the country. Overall across the country LEQ sales were consistent with 2012/13 and 2013/14 fishing licence sales.

After brief discussion it was moved that

The Fish Licence Sales report as at 31 January 2016 be received.

Paul Shortis/Brad Johnson

Carried

21. Expenditure Report

After discussion it was moved that

the Expenditure Report for 31 December 2015 and Financial Transactions for November and December 2015 be approved

Malcolm Francis/ Dan Waechter

Carried

Mr Teal informed Council that the accounting system would be changing to *Xero* from *Moneyworks* – which might afford an opportunity to adjust the financial reporting relatively easily.

Mr Teal informed Council that a vehicle replacement was planned and would be progressed in consultation with the Chairman.

22. Strategic Overview

Discussion ensued on developing effective strategic direction for staff to implement, and it wasn't sustainable to simply add items to an annual plan without adequately resourcing it. It was agreed that at the next meeting Councillors would be asked to provide their five top priorities in what they should be achieved in the next three years and how to resource them.

The NZ Fish & Game Council had recently reviewed its Governance Plan in December 2015 and it was considered appropriate that the Wellington Fish & Game Council should do likewise. Mr Teal was requested to undertake a review of the NZ F&GC governance policy and compare it to the existing Wellington F&GC Governance Policy and identify differences and potential improvements in the latter document. Councillor Morris indicated that NZ F&GC established a smaller working committee of two councillors and one staff member.

23. Correspondence and Media

After brief discussion it was moved that

Correspondence and Media reports for November – December be received

Chris O'Meara/ Dan Waechter

Carried

24. General Business

Councillor Tannock brought to the Council's attention that Jim Campbell (a strong advocate, educator, and creator of wetland habitat in the Wairarapa) had been recognised in the New Year's Honours list with an MNZ *Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit*. It was agreed that a letter be sent from Wellington Fish & Game Council outlining congratulations on receiving the award and appreciation of the work he has been part of over many years.

Councillor Muckley noted that Corina Jordan still required Council's support in developing the RM function within Fish & Game.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 6.20pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Masterton Cosmopolitan Club, Queen Street,
Masterton, Tuesday 5 April 2016 at 3.00pm.

Chairman_____

Date_____