

## **WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 3.05PM HELD AT HOTEL COACHMAN, 140 FITZHERBERT AVENUE, PALMERSTON NORTH.**

**1. Present:**

Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Malcolm Francis, Andrew McGregor, Don Scott, John Hancock, Chris O'Meara, Paul Shortis, Jim Cook, Richard McIntyre, Colin Shore, Aaron Passey.

**In Attendance:**

Fish and Game Staff: Phil Teal (Regional Manager), Dr Matt Kavermann, Hamish Carnachan, Cameron Wright, Nathan Field (part), Corinne Deans (part)

Licence Holders: Roger Smaile, Marc Flaws, Daniel Merritt (part), Dan Whyman (part), Jennifer Yanko (part), Lee Cook (part), Mike Bourke (part), Maurice Reid (part).

**2. Apologies:**

Councillors Andy Tannock.

It was moved

*that apologies be accepted*

**Malcom Francis/Jim Cook**

Carried

**Welcome and Confirmation of Agenda**

Chairman Cotsilinis welcomed the Council and public.

**3. Conflict of Interest**

Councillor Shortis identified a potential conflict of interest on certain items in that he was currently acting Chief Executive of NZ Fish and Game Council.

There were no other additional conflicts of interest that were identified specific to the agenda.

Mr Teal confirmed that the Conflict of Interest management plan would be updated if new conflicts of interest were identified or Council chose to deal with a managing a conflict in a different way.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting of 8 December 2020:**

After brief discussion it was moved that

***the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 8 December 2020 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.***

**Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara**

Carried

5. **Matters Arising:**

There was brief discussion of the judgment of Judge Dwyer on two breaches of the Resource Management Act by Greater Wellington Regional Council depositing sediment in Clarke's Stream from the Birchville Dam waterbody scouring. The judgment confirmed that the receiving waters were identified as a trout fishery and spawning water. The fine of \$90,000 was directed to be paid to the Greater Wellington Regional Council and the Council had indicated that this be deposited into a dedicated environmental restitution fund to be used for some environmental enhancement purpose.

Mr Teal confirmed the actions completed from the previous meeting but no specific matters arising were discussed.

6. **NZ Fish and Game Council Business**

Councillor Shortis noted that there had not been any NZ Council meetings held since the last Wellington Fish and Game Council meeting.

Councillor Shortis provided an overview of recent NZ Council business noting that Martin Taylor had resigned as NZ Council Chief Executive on 16 December 2020 – and it was confirmed that the timing was unexpected. NZ Council confirmed to appoint Mr Shortis as acting CE on 21 December 2020 as a holding pattern over the Christmas period. The NZ Council was also mindful of the timing of starting the recruiting processes for a new CE with respect to the timing of the Ministerial review (expected late February but deferred until March) – as this may materially affect the job description.

The Ministerial review has been confirmed to be delayed by at least one month (until March) after an earlier small extension noted after end of December 2020 until end of February 2021. Councillor Shortis noted that the NZ Council meeting planned for early March 2021 had been deferred and a video conference was now planned - as no Ministerial review would be available for discussion/presentation. Mr Shortis confirmed that as acting NZ Council CE had assisted NZ Council is evaluating employment agencies suitable to manage the selection process for the new Chief Executive. It was further noted that this process may take up to two months, and there may be a stand-down period of up to three months for any prospective

candidates – that the overall timeframe before a new CE started the role could extend to six months or more. There was therefore a requirement to have an acting CE in the interim to ensure work programmes are being undertaken at NZ Offices. Options for securing an acting (but temporary) CE would be actively pursued with urgency.

Chairman Cotsilinis considered that any acting CE for NZ Council would be on a temporary basis and likely to be from outside of the organisation.

Councillor Shortis confirmed that the Minister of Conservation had received the official Briefing to the incoming Minister of Conservation– which was similar but updated version of recent briefings provided to incoming Ministers.

Councillor O’Meara considered that Mr Taylor’s resignation was not that unexpected but conceded that timing was – as there had been no indication of his intentions to do so. Councillor Shortis noted that there had been a full and final and confidential transition arrangement made. He confirmed that the matters had been socialised with Department of Conservation officials and kept up-to-date of the arrangements to manage the transition.

Councillor Francis considered that the organisation should now move forward and put behind the externally reported tensions.

It was then moved that

***The report from Councillor Shortis on business relating to the NZ Fish and Game Council for the period December 2020 to end of January 2021 be received.***

**Malcolm Francis/Don Scott**

Carried

**7. Public Forum**

Chairman Cotsilinis invited members of the public to present items for discussion in the public forum.

Roger Smaile noted that he had had discussions with a senior infrastructure manager that were building several bridges in the Manawatu/Rangitikei districts – and confirmed that this manager had appreciated dealing with Fish and Game staff as they provided concise realistic appraisals of concerns that focused on their statutory responsibilities.

**8. Health and Safety Reporting**

Mr Teal outlined the work undertaken in the Palmerston North office to install a more efficient and upgraded more fit-for-purpose air conditioning system.

Mr Teal indicated that he had had preliminary discussions with other regions on approaches to undertake a formal H&S review by an external provider - with a view that several regions could group together or be undertaken on a national contract.

It was moved that

***Council receive the Health and Safety Report for December 2020 and January 2021***

**Colin Shore/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

**9. Recommendations for 2021 Game Season Regulations**

Discussion ensued on the recommendations made at the Zoom conference of Wellington Fish and Game Council held on 1 February 2021 with respect to limits for black swan and paradise shelduck for the 2021 Gamebird Regulations. Councillor O'Meara noted his apologies for the Zoom meeting.

Dr Kavermann provided an overview of the trends for each population monitored including the trend counts for black swan and paradise shelduck undertaken at the end of January.

Discussion focused on recommendations forwarded to the Minister contained in the provisional recommendations on agenda page 69 from notes of the 1 February 2021 zoom meeting. Councillor O'Meara noted that there were still isolated aggregations around properties adjacent to Lake Wairarapa – despite overall numbers being similar for Lake Wairarapa. Marc Flaws supported a few extra black swan limit for opening weekend but would encourage an extension of the duration to be for the first two weeks. Dr Kavermann confirmed that targeting black swan would be reinforced in the 2021 Game Magazine – with a focus on utilisation of the harvest.

Discussion ensued on hunting practices for black swan – with it noted that the density of hunters in the Lake Wairarapa district are unlikely to significantly collapse the stable population but issues resulting from aggregations could be dealt with by individual permits to farmers. This had been used successfully in recent years and relationships with farmers affected appeared to be positive.

Chairman Cotsilinis noted that the recommendations had already been provided to the Minister and we were confirming the decision made in the zoom meeting.

It was then moved that

***The recommendations made at the 1 February 2021 meeting for black swan season conditions for the 2021 Game Season be confirmed: 5 birds for the opening weekend and 3 bird limit for the remaining of the waterfowl season***

**Jim Cook/Colin Shore**

Carried

Dr Kavermann provided an overview of the trend counts and discussions regarding paradise shelduck trends presented as background for the Zoom meeting held on 1 February 2021. He confirmed that there was a stable population for the western and eastern districts of the region but were slightly decreasing. He noted that the number of requests for permits to disturb were not increasing and nuisance events with aggregations for land cropping issues were dealt with on an individual basis.

Discussion ensued on the possibility of viewing less birds at traditional moult sites but smaller groupings being anecdotally seen on non-traditional sites such as river beds. Dr Kavermann confirmed that he was aware of such reports but the major moult sites contained similar to slightly reduced numbers of moulting birds.

It was then moved that

***The recommendations made at the 1 February 2021 meeting for paradise shelduck season conditions for the 2021 Game Season be confirmed: 10 birds per day per hunter for the waterfowl season***

**Chris O'Meara/Colin Shore**

Carried

It was then moved that

***All other recommendations for 2021 Game Season conditions made at Wellington Fish and Game Council meeting on 8 December 2020 be confirmed***

**Jim Cook/Colin Shore**

Carried

**10. Strategic Planning Discussion**

Preliminary discussion was held on the previous summary from previous years on strategic priorities for each functional area and additional issues of urgency being anticipated to address.

Discussion also focused on the recent funding proposal outline from Cawthron Institute on trout and biodiversity management. Mr Carnachan noted that there were some key communications issues and messaging that needed to be developed to reinforce the values of trout and trout fishing – with information targeted to decision makers and general positive messaging to the wider public. Councillor Scott considered there needed to be clear direction in how we engage with organisations to get across Fish and Game’s perspectives. Chairman Cotsilinis concurred that a co-ordinate communications plan was key to providing the public with an understanding of the facts. Councillor McIntyre considered that Fish and Game messaging needed to be unpinning by science to maintain public credibility and respect – rather than relying on perceptions and media opinion pieces.

Councillor Shortis further observed that one of the challenges for Fish and Game was to get a portion of the \$18 million available for research, which currently none was being applied for. This could only be progressed if Fish and Game formalised staff resource capability, challenges and publicity, and research funders. Discussion ensued on the how to be part of the research proposal and gain a better understanding of the potential outcomes. Mr Teal clarified that there were two main parts of the Cawthorn proposal: one aspect would focus on physical science research, and another focused on social science and policy development - the latter would involve multiple parties in a consultation programme. Chairman Cotsilinis considered that there should be more scientific work completed to back up the narrative – as there is little evidential proof to back up opposing debate on trout – native fish interactions. It was postulated that the Government may potentially accept other sides of the argument with little scientific evidence.

Discussion ensued on the communication messaging focusing on habitat – rather trout vs native interactions.

Discussion then focused on the lack of formal national policy that provided direction on how regions considered these issues as currently ad hoc decisions may set precedents.

Chairman Cotsilinis suggested inviting an author of the Cawthron Institute proposal to the Endeavour Fund - Robin Holmes – attend a Wellington Council meeting to clarify aspects of the topics covered.

Councillor Hancock considered that opportunities for partnerships existing in the management of Lake Wairarapa – but current management arrangements were stifling any involvement other than Wairarapa Moana members.

It was agreed that further consideration and discussion on these strategic issues would be held at the March 2021 meeting to assist in budget definition.

**11. R3 Marketing Update**

Councillor Shortis confirmed that NZ Council were undertaking a reforecasting process of estimating licence sales and how this affected annual budgets. The initial analysis of licence sales shows that impacts on revenue from COVID related economic effects were not as bad as predicted for fish licence sales but the real bite will occur in February/March when the Non-Resident licence sales will be virtually nil (when they normally peak).

Councillor Shortis informed that NZ Council would co-ordinated an autumn marketing/sales push for fishing licence and there would also be a marketing/sales push for the duck hunting season.

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the supporting documentation attached letter sent to NZ Council by Chairman Cotsilinis (dated 12 November 2020) outlining a request for more allocation of resources to the marketing function. This indicated the potential vulnerability that Fish and Game faced with no (or limited) non-resident licence sales. Councillor Shortis also noted that the messaging for the beginning of the salmon season in the South Island would proceed but season prospects would probably not meet angler expectations.

Mr Teal provided a summary of the R3/Marketing efforts by staff:  
Email contact: prior to Christmas (and subsequently prior to holiday weekends in January and February) with various licence holder cohorts – those that had purchased a 2020/21 licence, those that had not yet purchased a 2020/21 licence but did in 2019/20, those that had lapsed from 2018/19.

Newsletter: Angling Newsletter sent out in December

Park and Cast: contribution to nationally co-ordinated initiative to have a simple 'park and cast' electronic map and directions easy to follow.

Chairman Cotsilinis noted that the fish licence sales to the 19 January 2021 were ahead of previous years for Wellington region (7.5%) and overall total for NZ (2.4%).

Councillor Francis noted that the regular promotion of Wellington fisheries by Hamish Carnachan in the regular weekly reports were appreciated by club anglers. This had created a good influx of interest for the club activities and the activity in general. Chairman Cotsilinis also observed that there had been

a lot more interest in flyfishing courses in Wellington and attendance at club meetings.

Councillor Francis further noted that the challenge Fish and Game had was to make sure there were adequate resource availability for anglers that provide success and good experiences. He also considered that there needed to be positive and practice messaging for non-anglers to encourage uptake of the pursuit. He believed that the discontinued (additional issues) of the Fish and Game magazine on sale at news agents would have been an asset promoting the pursuit to the wider public. He considered that the Wellington region's communication was excellent and this needed to be organisation wide.

Roger Smaile considered that Fish and Game needed to focus on what the best communication channels were to interact with potential licence holders – such as Facebook, website, club members word of mouth. This included how to best (and most cost effectively) communicate with cohorts not well represented in the licence sales statistics – e.g. engendering interest in angling to potential female anglers.

Councillor Scott observed that there had been increased interest last year in: the family fishing day, Hunting and Fishing organised flyfishing clinics, internet and Facebook specific interest groups (NZ Spin Fishing for Trout had over five thousand members). Councillor Scott noted that each cohort needed specific information needs or access requirements e.g. older people getting out onto rivers, or family groups who were starting out trying to engender enthusiasm in angling in young children. The communications requirements would vary considerably. He considered there was no one means of communication that would meet all requirements, but multiple channels would need to be considered. He postulated that Fish and Game had to be more innovated in providing opportunities for female anglers to uptake the pursuit – e.g. perch could be targeted at easy access waterbodies. Chairman Cotsilinis considered that there was more interest by mothers that attended the Capital Trout Centre – as there was more interest in recreational pursuits within NZ.

Councillor Shortis considered the next challenge would be how do we keep the New Zealand based anglers engaged next year – when other travel opportunities might present themselves – and have effective messaging to keep them fishing. Councillor Francis thought that Fish and Game might need to consider something different – else the same results might occur.

Councillor O'Meara considered that a key element is providing the resource and access to it to be successful at the pursuit. Dr Kavermann noted that a

certain amount of the marketing message was to manage the expectations of success or focus on the value of being in the wilderness per se.

Councillor McIntyre noted that for recruitment of children into active angling pursuits would be welcomed by parent – as an alternative to passive computer gaming.

Councillor McGregor observed that Fish and Game need to be appreciate that some participants might lapse because they don't like the activity, or they don't like the activity as much as an alternative.

**12. Policy Review – Game Bird Guide's Licence Latent Provisions**

Councillor Shortis provided an overview of the letter sent by NZ Council Chairman Ray Grubb (dated 26 January 2021) Game Bird Guide's Licence Latent Provisions. He noted that Parliament reviews all legislation and it had been noted that since 1996 despite a provision existing for a gamebird guide's licence, there had never been a push to licence guides. Opinions were being sought from regions as to whether there was support for retention or possible removal if there was no material interest in retaining the provisions.

After discussion it was moved

***That Wellington Council indicate to NZ Council that there was no interest to retain a provision to provide for a Game Bird Guide's Licence and would support its removal in a legislative review.***

**Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

**13. Commercial Origin Salmon Release Policy**

Discussion ensued on the scientific evidence and advice on the release of hatchery salmon with it concluding that it is likely to be detrimental to wild salmon fishery. It was not thought likely that a viable salmon fishery would establish in the Wellington region – with only infrequent sightings of wild fish in the Rangitikei River – and no proactive management would ensue. Chairman Cotsilinis confirmed that the advice received from Cawthron Institute and NIWA concurred with overseas reports that hatchery releases do not enhance wild fisheries long term.

After further discussion it was moved

***That Wellington Council does not support the release of hatchery reared commercial origin chinook salmon (or ova) into any open system of water.***

**Aaron Passey/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

**14. Resource Allocation Project**

Discussion ensued on the Resource Allocation Project and the report - ***Fish and Game Resource Allocation Project*** - prepared by Concept Consulting (dated 11 December 2020) for Fish and Game New Zealand.

Councillor Shortis provided an overview of the organisational review and confirmed that this project was important in reviewing the allocation of resources and assets across the organisation and sits alongside any considerations from the Ministerial review. He noted that currently six regions received grants and six regions paid levies to support those regions and NZ Fish and Game Council. He further outlined that the resource allocation model was developed with licence sales were relatively stable in the early 1990s and that this pattern of licence sales had changed in the last 30 years with more fishing occurring in the South Island. The reference panel (which included Chairman Cotsilinis) sought opinions on how to allocate resources fairly and appropriately – including models of licence sales per region, incorporating assessments of resource allocation where the need is (e.g. canal fishery in Central South Island did not require many resources to manage, or environmental factors such as lake v river based fisheries), and resource use based on licence holder days used.

Councillor Passey noted that it was important to consider Regional Council boundaries as some regions had two Regional Councils with twice the workload of areas that dealt with a single Regional Council.

Chairman Cotsilinis noted that examples used to indicate a need to have a flexible factors to establish operational needs were not (or not adequately) incorporated in the final report. It appeared that emphasis for resource allocation will largely be determined by fishing/hunting activities usage as the best indicator of the value of licence. This also looked at the formula incorporating variation over time – which is important for Roturua lakes fisheries where usage is declining but has similar (or increasing) management costs – compared to the CSI canal fisheries. This puts the organisational question on the long term viability of fostering a put and take fishery with declining licence sales.

Councillor Shortis considered the licence holder usage model provided a reasonable base for resource allocation – even if it didn't incorporate all the specific examples of management requirement exceptions. He postulated that there could be a mechanism in the resource allocation and budgeting process to move resources around to be more responsive (contestable funding approach for a greater portion of budgets).

Councillor Passey noted that the resource allocation would be allocated on the latest angler usage data conducted in the National Angler Survey (NAS) in 2015 which is also potentially out of date – it was confirmed that NZ Council was currently contracting NIWA to undertake the NAS in 2022.

Councillor Passey also noted there did not appear to be consideration for opportunity for usage activity (e.g. hunting season length being limited to two months – whereas angling opportunity could be for the twelve month period). Discussion ensued on the average number of days that hunters and anglers might spend in their pursuits – and how that related to average licence cost per hour for hunters and anglers.

Further discussion ensued on anomalies in the resources required to manage a fishery such as back country Rangitikei River fishery with few anglers using the blue ribband fishery versus CSI canal fishery with extensive use and few resources required to maintain such. It was suggested that developing a case study to have more equitable way of distributing funds to address these anomalies.

Councillor Francis noted that the trend in difference in South Island angler usage and North Island angler usage was potential spurious given that the Taupo fishery was not considered in the analysis and provided an unbalanced view of angler activity across the country. It was confirmed the principles of resource allocation should be needs based.

Councillor McIntyre noted that if Fish and Game were constrained by increasing the licence fee (either by restricted to CPI increases, or market driven price sensitivity) then this process shouldn't be creating windfalls for some regions. Councillor Shortis noted the Ministerial Review will also influence how resource allocations are considered (e.g. amalgamations of regions). The example of Northland region was discussed with no (or very little) trout fishery resources being subsidised by the organisation to have a fishery management component. Councillor Scott reaffirmed his view that the Fish and Game system should administer fisheries nationally rather than by geographic locations.

Councillor Shortis noted that allocations needed to be informed objectively and there was no intention to switch from one model to another – as any changes would be progressively introduced.

Councillor Shortis outlined a potential model to provide flexibility would be to have the current base funding model based on \$9 million changed to \$6 million with \$3 million more flexibly distributed through contestable funding (and justified).

Chairman Cotsilinis confirmed that the Concept Consulting report was distributed for information only and as a background to inform debate.

Councillor Hancock noted that there material contributions made by (Wellington) regional staff to the national organisational contribution which are not factored in. Councillor Shortis considered an audit of capabilities and resources would shed some light on the wider contributions made.

Chairman Cotsilinis noted that the NZC chair had requested information on staff resources to enable appropriate reviews to be undertaken – internally for fairness of remuneration and trying to determine liabilities of non-salary provisions (e.g. redundancy, retirement provisions). The initial response from some regions was to delay providing information until the Ministerial review is released. It was agreed that if there were implications emanating from the Ministerial review then having accurate assessments of liabilities were needed if discussing implications with the Minister.

Councillor Shortis also confirmed that it the Ministerial Review confirmed a focused emphasis on co-ordination of activities then this need to be better defined to ensure responsibilities are confirmed.

It was confirmed that there had been moves to increase the transparency of the NZ Council budgeting and expenditure by separating out the NZ Council operational budget and NZ Council managed National Project funds (e.g. F&GNZ Magazine, Licence Management System, Website Management). This should help remove ambiguity as to what projects were managed as regional advocacy and what projects were NZ Council's responsibility regarding national advocacy.

It was then moved

***That the report on the Resource Allocation Project be received***

Malcolm Francis/Aaron Passey  
Carried

**15. Financial Reserves Policy**

Council considered the Discussion Document – Draft Policy on the Accumulation, Management and Application of Reserves within Fish and Game by Ray Grubb (Chair of Standing Finance Committee) (undated). It was clarified that that this was a discussion document and not a draft national policy yet, so there would be another round of formal consultation once comments had been received back.

Chairman Cotsilinis and Mr Teal had previously provided comments to NZ Council on the reserve policy and anticipate that these would be considered in the final draft. This included reserve levels used for risk management, and clarification on the interpretations that that general and dedicated reserves are defined as unused licence income, and that general reserves are made up from surpluses only given some regions have used these for buildings. Chairman Cotsilinis agreed to draft a reply to the draft Reserves Policy with comments expected back in March 2021.

Mr Michael Bourke arrived at 5:10pm

**16. Draft Sports Fish and Game Management Plan**

A brief discussion it was confirmed that consultation on the draft Sports Fish and Game Management Plan could commence following identification of interested stakeholders.

It was moved that

***The consultation process for the Wellington region Sports Fish and Game Management Plan 2021-2031 may be initiated by staff***

**Chris O'Meara/Aaron Passey**

Carried

**17. GWRC Western Region Global Resource Consent Applications**

A brief discussion it was noted that no progress had been indicated by GWRC that any further discussions with Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai or Raukawa had progressed substantively.

It was moved

***To receive the update report of GWRC Western Region Global Resource Consent Applications***

**Malcolm Francis/Aaron Passey**

Carried

**18. One Plan Implementation – Plan Change 2 Hearing Update**

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the hearing proceedings and noted that a decision from the Commissioners was anticipated before the end of the previous calendar year but had not been informed of its progress of deliberations.

Councillor Passey indicated that the next Horizons Regional Council meeting was on 17 February 2021 and that the agenda should be checked if there had been any decisions considered.

It was then moved that

***Council receive the update report on the One Plan – Plan Change 2  
Hearing***

**Don Scott/Richard McIntyre**

Carried

**19. Wairarapa Water – Irrigation Project Update**

Councillor Shortis provided an overview of discussions that Sustainable Wairarapa were having following the lodgment of consent application by Water Wairarapa. It was noted that it appears that Water Wairarapa still have not provided a meaningful AEE (Assessment of Environmental Effects) despite the resource consent applications being 380 pages in size. It appears (unconfirmed by Fish and Game) that the applicant was encouraged by GWRC (who are consent authority and potential shareholder) to put in a provisional consent application. The AEE would likely focus on the dam site only and some preliminary reports seen by staff had consultants undertaking fish sampling in winter when trout would not be present - leading to a spurious overall conclusion about trout presence in the stream. Sustainable Wairarapa were also involved in a water resilience committee to look at overall water resilience and management for Wairarapa Valley - and concluded that water storage using natural features such as wetlands etc would be more effective long term. There were also issues relating to water use authorised by existing consents and potential increases in District Council use projections and requests in the future. Councillor Hancock urged caution on how Fish and Game criticised any options as there were large resources available to capture the narrative and promote options – being focused on effects on the fish and game resource. It was agreed that Fish and Game maintain their interest as an interested party.

It was then moved that

***Council receive the update report on the Wairarapa Water project***

**Jim Cook/Chris O’Meara**

Carried

**20. Lake Wairarapa Management Update**

A brief discussion ensued on the following points:

- No further progress or notification by DOC on establishing a walkway next to Simmonds Lagoon.
- No further advancement of settling the issues of mandating for iwi – which has the Treaty settlement process on pause.
- There was little clarification on the budgets appropriated by DOC and Regional Council for fish removal around Lake Wairarapa
- Maimai Allocation – an overview of the maimai allocation process was provide by Dr Kavermann and Nathan Field. They confirmed

that a comprehensive map had been established for Boggy Pond and Matthews Lagoon using drone and physical visitations. It planned to progress this through JK Donald Wetland and lake foreshore next. Dr Kavermann noted that many existing standholders and all the new standholders were progressing upgrading of their stands. The new standholders appeared to aware of the privilege of being able to have a stand at these sites and indications are that they would be good 'tenants'.

- Dr Kavermann noted that GWRC had sought further clarification on the use of nets for sampling fish and that he had requested further advice from Dr Adam Canning on alternatives to set nets used in Australia for monitoring – including potentially increased frequency of checking of nets (if nets are used).
- It was noted that perch egg removal project by a consultant for GWRC/DOC removed 4.5kgs of perch eggs but their appeared to be limited scientific rigour as to the objectives of the project, but this project had received funding from the central Government funded “jobs for nature” programme over the next three years.
- It was agreed that Wairarapa Moana group should be encouraged to think more holistically about the management issues and actions, as the objectives of the current work were limited and potentially ineffective in creating enhancements.
- Dr Kavermann noted that from the Wairarapa Moana meeting in December the funding (\$3.6 million) from central Government was discussed but little to no input from other parties was presented to Ministry for the Environment as viable projects (only existing projects were Wairarapa Moana/Regional Council focused projects were considered for extended funding). He further noted that the NZ Gamebird Habitat Trust representatives had confirmed up to \$100,000 was available for work on the JK Donald Wetland. He noted that he had suggested additions to the Wairarapa Moana meeting minutes to more accurately record the comments made by the Trust. Councillor Hancock noted that there was a focus on planting trees – not taking an overall view of habitat management and other specific considerations such as flight lines of waterfowl.

It was then moved that

***Council receive the update report on the Lake Wairarapa Management Issues***

**Colin Shore/Aaron Passey**

Carried

**21. Junior/Novice Participation Update**

Chairman Cotsilinis provided an overview of the management of trout numbers at Capital Trout Centre noting that there were issues contributing to a drop in numbers. The most likely possibility was shags eating them and trying to determine the timing of such to help identify mitigation measures.

Councillor Scott confirmed continued interest from Manawatu Freshwater Anglers Club to run the family fishing event at Hokowhitu Lagoon this year.

Dr Kavermann confirmed that trout requirements for these fish out days were confirmed two years in advance and that Eastern Region stocks of two year old fish should be back to capacity following the loss of stock two years ago.

It was then moved

***To receive the update report on junior/novice participation***

**Don Scott/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

**22. Access Issue Update**

Clarification was sought on access to the Waiohine River via the SWDC land leased to the gliding club. It was noted that GWRC and SWDC to use gravel track alongside runway and that public access (vehicle) is often denied (locked gate) with reasoning given that it is a working farm or vehicles might cause safety concerns for wayward gliders.

Cameron Wright provided a update on the angler access sign inventory noting that it was a significant body of work and that he had replaced several signs that had been removed or damaged. He also outlined that he had updated the text for an access pamphlet for the Kapiti Coast rivers.

Councillor Francis noted that clarification on access to the lower Ohau River was required as obtaining access from the landowner was variable and inconsistent.

After further discussion it was then moved

***To receive the reports on access issue update***

**Malcolm Francis/Chris O'Meara**

Carried

**23. Application for Special Licence – Horizons Regional Council**

Dr Kavermann provided an overview of the updated work programme that Horizons Regional Council were proposing for State of Environment reporting and specific work programme in two catchments as part of their fish

monitoring programme. He indicated that the work would have negligible effect on the sports fish population and was non-controversial.

It was then moved

***That a permit to take sports fish in the Wellington Fish and Game Region as defined by the work programme be processed for Horizons Regional Council including an extension of dates from original proposal***  
**Aaron Passey/Richard McIntyre**

Carried

Nathan Field, Lee Cook, Dan Whyman arrived at 5.35pm

**24. Management Report – 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2021**

Councillor Scott encouraged seeking further details of funding for 'spade ready' to provide transparency.

After further brief discussion it was moved that

***Council receive the Management Report for period 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2021 be received.***

**Don Scott/Aaron Passey**

Carried

**25. Licence Sales report**

Mr Teal provided an overview of the fishing licence sales:

- 2020/21 fish licence sales LEQs were up significantly (7.5%) compared to last year (+180 LEQs) using income from Non-Resident Licence Holders as 1.3LEQ).

It was moved that

***The licence sales reports for Fish Licence Sales 2020/2021 as at 19 January 2021 be received***

**Aaron Passey/Jim Cook**

Carried

**26. Expenditure Report/Financial Transactions**

The summary of income and expenditure to 31 December 2020 was considered. Chairman Cotsilinis noted that the actual expenditure was ~\$221,000 and the budget for the year to date was ~\$277,000 which reflected a very conservative approach to expenditure and efforts by staff to minimise the anticipated deficit.

Councillor Scott noted that the cash flow reductions were in line with expected variation.

It was then moved

***Receive and Accept the Expenditure Reports to 31 December 2020 and Financial Transactions for November and December 2020.***

**Jim Cook/Paul Shortis**

Carried

Mr Teal noted that he would be actively assessing vehicle replacement as it had been deferred for over six months in the planned conservative replacement cycle.

**27. Communications and Media**

Council acknowledged that outstanding efforts of Dr Kavermann to secure the funds for the Game Bird Habitat Trust (Up to \$130,000 per year for three years = \$390,000 in total) for planting trees in wetland sites.

It was then moved

***To receive report on items of interest in communications and media***

**Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

**28. Wellington Conservation Board Liaison**

Councillor Scott provided an overview report on the Wellington Conservation Board meeting that he attended in January 2021. He considered that the Board members were not fully aware of what Fish and Game did nor Fish and Game's statutory responsibility – and this information could be provided to them at a future meeting.

Daniel Merritt arrived at 5.50pm

Councillor Scott noted that there was considerable discussion on deer population management – and the dilemma paradox of managing the species as a resource and for nuisance reduction (as a pest). He didn't note any dissent on trout being viewed as a valued introduced species. He recommended that Fish and Game continue to attend meetings and increase liaison with the Conservation Board, and it was further noted that there were legislative links requiring/encouraging such. Councillor Scott considered that it would also be worthwhile to present a specific focused and detailed issue to the Conservation Board rather than an overview – to gain support or provide awareness to the Board.

Corrine Deans arrived at 5.53 pm

After further discussion it was moved

***To receive the report from Councillor Scott on the attendance at the January 2021 Wellington Conservation Board meeting***

**Malcolm Francis/Colin Shore**

Carried

**29. General Business**

Daniel Merritt expressed his views on the communications that Fish and Game undertakes and what would be the best ways to get information on what Fish & Game out to licenceholders. He considered that most hunters were unaware of the considerable efforts made by staff and would be interested in what does Wellington Fish and Game does outside the season to maintain the resource. He noted topics such as duck banding and management of Wairarapa Lake access would be useful.

Discussion ensued on the best ways to undertake communications with licence holders and how people seek information differently:

- first opening weekend roundup – with such a focus on opening weekend
- Facebook Page (own page/national page)
- F&G Websites
- Contribution to Facebook pages

Mr Carnachan confirmed that Wellington Fish and Game could be doing more in the digital space and would be investigating the best ways to undertake this – acknowledging that it can be labour intensive to manage a Facebook page (regarding comments and moderator)

**30. Recognition of Contribution Medals**

Several medals were presented to the following recipients for contributions to the governance of Fish and Game, improvements to wildlife habitat, and acknowledgement of assistance in undertaking the mallard banding programme.

**Mike Bourke** - for outstanding contribution to habitat project management in the Rangitikei catchment.

**Roger Smaile** - Outstanding contribution as governor on Wellington Fish & Game Council

**John Callesen** - For contribution to mallard monitoring banding programme within the Wellington Region – providing access and assistance

**Dan Whyman** - For contribution to mallard monitoring banding programme within the Wellington Region

**Jennifer Yanko** - For contribution to mallard monitoring banding programme within the Wellington Region

**Lee Cook** - For contribution to mallard monitoring banding programme within the Wellington Region

**Colin Shore** - For contribution to management of the fish and game resource within the Wellington Region

There being no items of general business the meeting was closed at 6.03pm.

Next Meeting to be held: ***Club Wairarapa, 20 Essex Street, Masterton on 23 March 2021 at 3pm.***

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_