

## MINUTES OF THE GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING 23 AUGUST 2018

### Held at Conservation House, Department of Conservation, Manners Street Wellington

**Present:** Don Hammond (Chair), Geoff Kerr, Garry Ottmann, Carol Watson, Roger Duxfield, Richard Burdon, Rachael Dean, Stephen Hall, Jenny Wotten (Executive Officer)

**Also in attendance:** Mervyn English (DOC), Rod Treder (DOC), Natalie Bowers (DOC), Rick McGovern-Wilson (DOC), Brent Beaven (DOC), Geoff Woodhouse (DOC)

**Apologies:** Minister Eugenie Sage, Alec McIver.

- 1. Welcome, Agenda, Health & Safety:** Don Hammond welcomed Councillors and visitors. Rod Treder provided a Health & Safety Induction for the building.
- 2. Agenda:** a number of extra items were added to the agenda: discussion about Rusa Deer, Tuho, Export Levy, Research proposed for Pig Hunting/scoping, note from Treasury (statement of performance expectations), letter from COLFO Rachael Dean, draft reports from accountant.

<b>Motion 20/1:</b> Moved Geoff Kerr/Carol Watson: that the agenda be confirmed.	CARRIED
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- 3. Minutes of previous meeting 17 May 2018:** were taken as read with minor alterations as agreed.

<b>Motion 20/2:</b> Moved Stephen Hall/Richard Burdon: that the Minutes of the 17 May 2018 Meeting be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.	CARRIED
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#### 4. Matters arising:

- a. Use of lures: GAC website** - to be updated with message that the GAC does not recommend the use of lures, not done, to be followed up.
- b. OSPRI** – link to OSPRI survey circulated and the GAC has been in contact with the Operations Planner Kaye Seymour regarding their 18 July email. Several Councillors have communicated with OSPRI about their stakeholder engagement and consultation practices. An interim response from the Operations Planner indicates that the conversations so far and the responses to the survey will provide the catalyst for some genuine change. OSPRI will soon have a new CEO.
- c. Aerial toxins** - The GAC position on 1080 was discussed along with our current policy which appears on the GAC website. There is a lot of misconception, especially on social media, about 1080. It was agreed it would be timely to review the GAC policy on this matter to see if any terminology can be improved and also to produce a one-page summary. **Action item 20/1** Update the toxins policy.
- d. ZIP** – Put links on the GAC website to the ZIP project - Garry Ottmann to follow up **Action item 20/2**.
- e. Aerial Assisted Trophy Hunting (AATH) code** – The Code is now almost 4 years old, having initially been developed by the GAC developed for the Minister in December 2014. Roger Duxfield asked Rod Treder what stage the document is at now and whether the GAC would have an opportunity to see if it is still up-to-date and fit for purpose before it is implemented by the Department. Rod advised it was scheduled for implementation on 9 February 2019 and the GAC could have further input to ensure it is compliant. Collation of AATH information and percentages of kills was also discussed. Rod Treder will obtain a copy of the current document and send it to GAC for input **Action item 20/3**. The GAC will continue working with the Department on the AATH code, planned for rollout in November 2018. Rod Treder advised that current AATH permits expire on 9 February 2019.
- f. MSC training for new firearms licences** – Council discussed feedback received about the new licencing system. Our biggest concern is that new firearms users in rural & remote locations won't

have access to practical firearms safety training. We will continue to work with the MSC and NZ Police to stress the importance of affordable and available firearms training. It was also decided that the GAC would undertake its own survey on the GAC website to get feedback on the new system. A courtesy email will be forwarded to MSC advising this will be happening and that we will share the results with them. **Action item 20/4** conduct a survey on the GAC website about the MSC/NZ Police new firearms training process.

- g. Iwi engagement** – Alec McIver provided feedback on the GAC Meeting with Tūhoe on 17 August 2018. Tūhoe has invited the GAC to meet to discuss the ‘control strategy’ for Te Urewera. We are considering how the Council might be of assistance to promote improved ecological and recreational outcomes in Te Urewera.
- h. Firearms licence for visitors** – Roger Duxfield has continued to work with the NZ Police about the problems experienced by overseas visitors wanting to bring a firearm into NZ as per Action 19/2. Confusion arose following the NZ Police centralising the approval process (by District Firearms Officers) to Wellington, and problems with the development of the online system, technical issues and long processing times.
- i. One-page fact sheet on Owning a Firearm in NZ** – this fact sheet, previously sent to MPs by Sporting Shooters New Zealand in 2016, needs minor updating. It was agreed that the fact sheet needed updating - see Action 19/3.
- j. Parliamentary Hunt** - an invitation has gone out to Members of Parliament to participate in the 2018 Annual Parliamentary Hunt at the privately-owned Ngamatea Station, from 8 to 13 October 2018.
- k. Hunting Permits** – Carol Watson reported on communications with DOC on this subject. They have received her report and are working within the policy team on the next steps. DOC asked also to investigate opportunity to include firearms licence numbers & permanent address in permit process to enable valuable data about how many Australian hunters are coming to NZ.
- l. Shot Show 2019** – See Action 18/1.
- m. Laptop** - has been purchased, GAC Microsoft licence to be purchased. Old laptop to be fully depreciated, written off and all data destroyed.

<b>Motion 20/3:</b> Moved Rachael Dean/Roger Duxfield: Purchase of laptop noted, approval given to purchase GAC Microsoft licence.	CARRIED
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- n. Bowhunters Code of Ethics** – Roger Duxfield has done some work on this document and Carol Watson has sent the revised Code of Ethics back to the Bowhunters for their consideration.
- o. Deer Repellent** - Rod Treder undertook to find out if there is any new information about the use of deer repellent (see Minutes 17 May 2018 Action 19/12). It was also noted that two different products for deer repellent were currently being trialled and that the GAC are keen to record our support for deer repellent and that this would be incorporated into the review of the GAC toxin policy **Action 20/1**.

**5. Correspondence** - Correspondence was presented and discussed.

<b>Motion 20/4:</b> Moved Richard Burdon/Roger Duxfield: That inward correspondence be accepted and outward correspondence be approved.	CARRIED
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- 6. GAC appointments** - Mervyn English advised Council about the upcoming appointment process. The term of appointment for five Councillors (Geoff Kerr, Garry Ottmann, Alec McIver, Roger Duxfield and Carol Watson) will expire on 30 November 2018 and a call for nominations is currently underway. In accordance with the GAC Act 2013, the vacancies have been advertised. Information is on the DOC website: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/game-animal-council/>. Don Hammond is concerned about the huge loss of experience from around the Council table but also excited to see what skills and attributes new Councillors will bring.

The GAC needs to demonstrate our value proposition and come to a good understanding with the Minister of what we can offer in the Conservation portfolio.

7. **Engaging with the Hunting Sector** – Natalie Bowie spoke to Council about the scope and timing of her project and thanked the GAC for its contribution to the list of stakeholders. Natalie will send the GAC a copy of Mike Slater’s letter which outlines the process and Terms of Reference, early next week. Mervyn English explained that for the hunting community, this project is an opportunity, for the GAC and others to show the Minister how they can contribute to conservation and comment on what is working well and what is not working well. Mervyn said that it will be a two staged process with the first stage gathering information and during the second stage, the GAC would be invited to comment on preliminary findings and provide comment. The exact timing is a little uncertain but Mervyn expects he will be in contact with the GAC again around the end of November.
8. **Himalayan Tahr Control Plan 1993** – Geoff Woodhouse spoke to Council about tahr numbers. The Minister has asked DOC to step up efforts to control Himalayan Tahr on public conservation land. There was an extensive discussion regarding how, where and when this operation would be undertaken. Don Hammond said this is a hugely significant issue for all hunters and it is vital the Council gives it the highest priority and works with all stakeholders towards the best possible outcome.

There is acceptance that tahr numbers need to be reduced and that the hunting sector wants to contribute to that. The GAC will provide its expertise to assist in refining the current proposal and input to the Tactical Plan. It is hoped that a few misconceptions can be corrected at the first reconstituted Tahr Liaison Group Meeting on 29 August 2018 where Councillors Geoff Kerr and Garry Ottmann will represent the Council. The GAC will write to Andy Roberts raising these issues and noting the Himalayan Tahr Plan is now 25 years old and should be updated. While the GAC has no direct role in managing game animal numbers, this is a good opportunity to add value to a rework of the 1993 Plan. The GAC will liaise with the Department on a rework of the 1993 Plan and, longer term, ask to be involved in ongoing monitoring once acceptable tahr levels have been reached, as part of a 5 Year plan.

As part of its role on the Tahr Liaison Group, in the first instance, the GAC will gather more information on tahr numbers (**Action item 20/5**) and the effect of population control operations on the herd size, structure, reproductive capacity and population dynamics.

9. **DOC update**- Rod Treder provided a DOC update which is attached to these Minutes.
  - a. **HOSI** - Rod spoke to his paper advising that all HOSI work is now on hold, pending receipt of a Ministerial letter of expectation. This is disappointing as the GAC had nearly finished completion of the structure of the process that would have been acceptable to the Department but the resource working on this within DOC has now been withdrawn.
  - b. **Certificates of Export** - Rod gave an update on the DOC issued Certificates of Export (not included in his report), for a range of non-CITES species. The Certificates are to be phased out and replaced by a declaration from the Director-General of DOC listing species that can be legally hunted and exported as trophies, velvet, fur and meat (introduced deer species, Himalayan tahr, chamois and possums). DOC will continue to provide Certificates for Export until 17 August 2018 to allow time for overseas border authorities to learn about the change. Roger Duxfield has been involved in discussions with the Department and exporters who questioned who could be contacted in NZ by CITES authorities in the USA and other countries when they encounter issues, such as processing holdups by port border control agencies, storage problems etc.

While the DOC change has largely now been implemented, there is still concern that CITES authorities in other countries will have difficulty conveying new compliance changes to border

control agencies such as US Fish & Wildlife and USDA. Roger Duxfield asked if everyone who had raised issues with MFAT had their issues resolved now the bulk of the animal had gone out of the country for the year. Rod Treder wasn't certain and said this could still be a risk area for exporters and any specific requests need to be sent to MFAT and/or MPI to assist in mitigating specific risks. Richard Burdon said the commercial sector had no record of numbers of trophies leaving the country which is not good for quantifying tourism statistics. GAC could pick this function up if we had a resource to do it with.

- c. **Hunting permit review** – Carol Watson asked Rod Treder what the Department was looking for in its Hunting Permit Review. Over the course of the last year, Carol has repeatedly asked different people in DOC for information and the only response she's had is that it is still progressing. Carol wants a face to face meeting to discuss the bigger picture and how the GAC might contribute to the review they are supposedly undertaking. This has become more urgent given what we understand will be in the Minister's Letter of Expectation which places a high priority on hunter education and the question of licenses/permits. Rod Treder undertook to ask the Policy Director of the project to provide a liaison person for the GAC to work with. There was further discussion about capturing email addresses and being allowed to use them for further research and NZPHGA efforts to try to fix the permit system. The GAC needs a clear policy on a clear Permit System which is what the DOC Review is trying to achieve. Don Hammond asked Richard Burdon to prepare a draft GAC policy **Action item 20/6**.
- d. **WARO** - Rod summarised the WARO national permit situation and land assessment process which has resulted in the existing permits extended now to 30 September. It is important that in her project, Natalie Bowie distinguishes regulatory process from WARO and looks at the viability of operators when only small areas are available and the impact of buffer zones.
- e. **New DOC fire control policy** – GAC is continuing to work with DOC to consider the ramifications of a draft DOC policy (National Policy for Fire Control Operations 30 August 2017) regarding cooking and warming fires within one hour's walk of vehicle access, without permits. We will work with DOC and FENZ to assist the communication on the policy, its implications for hunters and how we can help distribute this information to stakeholders. Rod Treder provided some information about how the policy originated from a DOC led recreational user group. Rod Treder will let the GAC know when we can look at their draft document and have input.

**10. Letter of Expectation from the Minister to the GAC** – Receipt of this is imminent and it is likely that it will align well with the Council's current Strategic Plan.

**11. Engagement of Contractor for the provision of services to the GAC** – Don Hammond recapped his Chairman's report on the engagement of a contractor and thanked Stephen Hall for all the work he has done on progressing this so far. Employing a fixed term contractor to provide general management services to the GAC will allow the Councillors to focus on governance. Discussion was had around the procurement process and it was agreed that the Request for Proposal be advertised and a sub-committee of Don Hammond, Stephen Hall and Rachael Dean was appointed to oversee the evaluation process. Funding needed to place advertisements was also approved.

<b>Motion 20/5:</b> Moved Don Hammond/Stephen Hall: That the GAC proceed with the proposal to engage a contractor to provide services to the GAC.	<b>CARRIED</b>
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**12. Brent Beaven Predator Free 2050 update** – Following on from his previous presentation to Council, Brent Beaven provided an update on Predator Free 2050 on their strategy and draft discussion document. This is particularly relevant given the anticipated massive beech mast event in 2019 and the increased DOC budget for aerial toxins. The Council is planning a meeting with Brent during September to see what input we can have to the discussion document. The discussion document is intended to give the Minister confidence everything is going to plan. Stephen Hall has seen the most recent presentation and will be our point of contact.

**13.Sika Show and next meeting** – The Sika Show is on 29 & 30 September. It would make sense to have the next GAC Meeting at Taupo while Councillors are there. It was decided we'd have the meeting on Monday 1 October, venue to be advised. The final meeting of the year would be in late November and both new and old Councillors would attend together.

**14.Sub Committee Working Group reports** - all reports were taken as read.

a. **Statutory Processes** – See attached report from Geoff Kerr providing an update on Statutory Processes including:

- **ZIP trial in the Perth Valley** - there has been excellent cooperation between Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP), DOC, Predator Free 2050 Ltd, NZDA, NZPHGA, Lincoln University, Landcare, a local helicopter company and the GAC, following the Council's request to include an assessment of Tahr mortality as part of ZIP's 2018 possum & rat eradication trial in the Perth Valley. Although the ZIP trial has now been postponed until early 2019, the postponement provides an excellent opportunity for discussions around mitigation. Kea within the project site have also been radio-tagged by ZIP to determine the impact of the operation and the GAC sees this as an ideal opportunity to promote the protection of Kea with hunters even if it means there is no ballot in these blocks.
- **Ruahine Deer Park Management Meetings** – Geoff Kerr spoke about Ruahine progress with all the groups now fully engaged and talking to each other. Geoff congratulated DOC and particularly, Reg Kemper for the great job they are doing in this potentially complicated space.

**15.Finance & Administration Committee's Report and GAC financial accounts** - Rachael spoke to her financial report prepared by the new accountants Shand Thomson. Shand Thomson has been engaged and will prepare the 2017-18 accounts.

<b>Motion 20/6:</b> Moved Rachael Dean/Stephen Hall: That the GAC engage Shand Thomson to prepare the GAC's 2017-18 accounts.	CARRIED
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<b>Motion 20/7:</b> Moved Rachael Dean/Stephen Hall: That the financial report be accepted and that payments made are approved.	CARRIED
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**16.Lincoln University Scholarship** - At the GAC Meeting held in May 2018, Council endorsed the New Zealand Pig Hunting Association's Code of Conduct for pig hunting. It is estimated there are currently 25,000 Pig Hunters in NZ, hunting predominantly for food. Through Geoff Kerr, Lincoln University will be offering a scholarship soon to identify ways to better engage with thousands of NZ pig hunters and quantify the overall harvest. The outcomes of this could provide valuable data for Kauri dieback research and be a good conversation to have with Tuhoë also. The successful scholarship winner will have finished their degree and will commence paid employment working under Geoff Kerr to develop a report.

**17.Media misrepresenting the GAC** – It is important that the GAC correct erroneous comments made in the media, implying that the GAC funded Councillor's trips to a Las Vegas hunting convention. This is incorrect. Councillors that attended this event did so in their own capacity, representing other hunting related organisations. **There has been no instance of GAC Councillors traveling to Los Vegas or elsewhere or claiming these expenses at GAC expense.**

**18.General Business** – Roger Duxfield is keen to spend time with the new Councillors and help initiate them into their roles including providing advice on the requirement of belonging to a Statutory Body.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm.

## **DOC Report – GAC Meeting – 21 August 2018**

### **WARO permitting 2018**

- Existing national permit extended to 30 September 2018
- Process for issuing the 2018 permit is being managed by DOC Permissions team, as a standard regulatory process;
- Submissions on the draft recommendations on WARO land access (to inform the land schedule/scope of the 2018 national permit) closed on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018.
- The Permissions team is well advanced on assessing the submissions received.

### **Predator Free 2050 and Battle for our Birds**

- Predator Free 2050 Limited has invested in 3 regional predator free projects: in Taranaki, Hawkes Bay and Wellington.
- Work is continuing on an overall PF2050 Strategy (led by DOC). The target completion date for this work is December 2018.
- Retaining support for 1080 as the only practicable tool for landscape scale predator control initiatives is viewed as an essential element of the strategy.
- In late May results were published relating to the 20-year predator control (rats, stoats and possums) programme in the Landsborough valley (South Westland), involving valley-wide trapping and six aerial-1080 operations. Refer: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/battle-for-our-birds/landsborough-valley-bird-numbers-double/>
- DOC is currently preparing information for the 2019/20 predator control programme, for discussion with NZDA and GAC. The intention is to work with key hunting stakeholders over the next 6 months, to help DOC understand and mitigate the effects of the programme on hunters.
- It is expected that the 2019-20 predator control programme will include ground control methods in areas like Whareorino, Ottawa, Waipapa ecological area, Mahoenui weta, and Murchison Mountains. Also, a number of the aerial 1080 operations will be done in partnership with other agencies, such as Taranaki Mouna project Ltd (Egmont National Park), OSPRI (Rangataua) and Project Janzoon Trust Company Limited (Abel Tasman National Park)

### **ZIP Perth Valley ‘1080 to Zero’ prescription trial**

ZIP has just published (1 August) the latest update on the Perth project on its website:

<http://zip.org.nz/updates/2018/8/further-update-on-perth-river-valley-project-possum-removal-operation>

The aerial 1080 predator removal phase of the research and development programme in the Perth River valley is now expected to commence in early 2019.

This phase was originally scheduled to be completed during winter 2018, but the forecast weather conditions in the valley mean that ZIP is not confident that the 1080 to Zero method could be effectively implemented in a timely fashion, to completely remove introduced predators.

### **Herds of Special Interest**

All DOC work is on-hold pending receipt of Ministerial letter of expectations to GAC, and any related subsequent discussion with the Minister.

### **Tactical Plan for Tahr control.**

DOC is developing a tactical plan that will set out the tactics, methods and approaches to reduce the feral tahr population to within the 10,000 limit set out in the Himalayan Tahr Control Plan 1993.

The Minister has asked DOC to make urgent progress on bringing the tahr population back to the levels set out in the plan. The tactical plan will focus on who leads the work in each location, what methods are

used (e.g. Judas tahr, ground hunting, aerial hunting, AATH offsets, WARO, enhanced recreational hunting, control by landowners, etc), what times of year and costs.

The Council has been invited to send a representative the next meeting of the Tahr Liaison Group set for 29 August in Christchurch.

Geoff Woodhouse will be at the meeting to answer questions on this.

### **DOC engagement project**

DOC is about to undertake an engagement project, involving key stakeholders in the hunting and conservation sectors, to provide information that will provide guidance to the Minister on the path forward for the Council.

Natalie Bowie will provide more information on this at the meeting.

### **Game Animal Council Nominations**

DOC commenced advertising for the five vacancies on the Council on 20 August, with advertisements in the five main daily newspapers and through its social media platforms.

The vacancies will be re-advertised on 5 September, with a closing date of 24 September.

Refer <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/game-animal-council/> for information on the vacancies and the nomination form.

Rick McGovern-Wilson will outline the appointments process at the meeting.

## NZ Game Animal Council

### COUNCIL PAPER



<b>DATE:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> August 2018	<b>FROM:</b>	Don Hammond
<b>TOPIC</b>	Chair update		
<b>PURPOSE</b>	Information		
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	Discuss		

A busy few months since our last meeting, with several key issues on the radar. This update is not presented in any special order but should be part of our discussion at the meeting.

#### Review of the Future of the GAC

On the morning of 14<sup>th</sup> August, many of us listened to a radio piece about the GAC which traversed several key issues.

Of special importance to the Council was the Minister advising that “the future of the GAC is under review and a decision will be made in the next few months”. I think this has come as a surprise to us all, and to many others. I am not able to advise whether there are Terms of Reference developed or the process which this review is to follow. Obviously this is of considerable concern to us all and I am trying to gain some clarity from the Minister’s office.

I will advise you all as soon as I have any details. In the meantime, it is important that we continue to carry out the statutory functions we are required to complete and to continue working with all stakeholders in the hunting sector.

#### Tahr

You will all be aware that this is of considerable concern to the Minister. In particular, numbers are well above the level prescribed in the Himalayan Tahr Management Plan (HTMP). Regardless of the true number, there is little doubt numbers are above the 10,000 prescribed in the plan.

The Minister wants action on this. The department appears to have been directed to focus efforts on reducing numbers and at the NZDA conference, the Minister advised that recreational hunters were to be the last option after departmental culling and WARO in order to reduce numbers quickly.

The Department is working on updating the Plan and Geoff and Garry are taking a lead on this piece of work on behalf of the Council.

Getting a good outcome in the plan is vital to our stakeholders and to the Department, so that conservation values are protected. The real challenge will be how this is achieved, not whether it should be.

An issue that the Minister has identified is the lack of returns from recreational hunters, which has been interpreted as a lack of ‘kills’. In reality there is no mechanism for recreational hunters to record their

success in the DOC system so perhaps we need to be thinking about and discussing with DOC, how this could be achieved.

### **NZDA Conference**

I was asked to speak at the Conference and most of my talk was dedicated to how the GAC can assist in resolving matters such as the tahr numbers noted above. It is fair to say that the 'value proposition' of the GAC is not understood by the Minister. It is our view that the Council can assist the Department to achieve the desired Conservation and other outcomes it seeks through using the resources and capability of the GAC.

We need to work harder on making sure this is well understood.

### **Letter of Expectation**

To date nothing has been received from the Minister regarding our work programme and priorities for the rest of the year. Despite this, the Council has several statutory responsibilities it must deliver on, so we need to continue working on these.

I remain hopeful we will receive something in the near future.

### **Engaging Paid Support for GAC Activity**

We have progressed this to the point where the draft is in your papers for the meeting. We have not advertised the role as yet as we have been wanting to ensure it aligns with the Letter of Expectation.

For this meeting, please be prepared to discuss this final draft so it can be advertised immediately. Please also consider who might be interested in receiving this and also how we will assess response and get someone on board.

I would like to believe we can get this underway in the next 2 weeks.

### **New Councillors**

Later this year, the term of several of our Council comes to an end. While their 'retirement' will be sorely felt, we also need to be thinking about who might put their hand up and be nominated. There is a huge amount of work to do so we need a strong group of nominees for the Minister to make appointments from.

Please give some thought to this issue and discuss the idea with suitable people.

Look forward to seeing you all next Wednesday evening.

Don

## NZ Game Animal Council



### COUNCIL PAPER

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>10 August 2018</b>	<b>FROM:</b>	<b>Geoff Kerr</b>
<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>Activity update</b>		
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>Information &amp; Discussion</b>		
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>Accept</b>		

#### Conservation Management Strategies.

- The Wellington CMS returned to the June 2018 NZCA meeting. It requires minor modification before returning to NZCA.
- Notification of the East Coast/Hawkes Bay CMS is expected in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018.
- Bay of Plenty – drafting underway.

#### National Park management plans.

- Aoraki/Mt Cook: GAC received notification 9<sup>th</sup> August that the draft plan is about to be released for consultation.
- Westland/Tai Poutini: Draft plan is expected any time.
- Fiordland & Mt Aspiring: Consultation with iwi is underway to decide how to proceed.

#### Department of Conservation easements:

- No progress.

#### Department of Conservation Aerial 1080 mitigation

- The extent of the Wilberforce/Mathias operation has been reduced substantially by private ground control. EDR will be applied to the whole of the aerial control area. The operation is due for early September.
- Bill O’Leary & I met DOC staff in Nelson on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2018 to scope DOC’s upcoming aerial toxin programme.
- Predictions are for a massive mast for 2019, particularly for the south west of the South Island.
- It is impossible to predict the precise operational areas at this stage.
- DOC has an increased budget for aerial toxins.
- DOC is extremely appreciative of GAC & NZDA involvement and intends to fully engage both organisations when there is some clarity about proposed operational areas.

#### WARO regional consultation

- Informal feedback received on this process is that it has been an open exchange between DOC and stakeholders and that DOC has made some changes as a result of the process.

#### DOC fire policy

- DOC is finalising this policy and will seek GAC guidance on how to communicate the new policy to GAC stakeholders.

### ZIP trial, Perth River, South Westland

- Postponed until 2019 because of adverse weather.
- Garry Ottmann and I are in the process of deciding what, if anything, needs to happen with the tahr that have been radio collared for the GAC collaborative by-kill research. Animal ethics approval expires in November 2018.
- The 2019 Adams Wilderness tahr ballot will be affected. GAC is monitoring proposed mitigation.

### Ruahine Deer Management Working Group

- I attended a meeting of the Group in Masterton June 19<sup>th</sup> 2018.
- The Group has developed a stronger understanding of its shared interests, is working well, and has agreed to meet more frequently to hasten progress.

### NZ Conservation Authority June 2018 meeting

- Received the Himalayan Tahr Control Plan – Annual Report 2016/2017 from Fiona Anderson, DOC Hokitika.
- The NZCA website report on the meeting states:  
 “Disappointingly, tahr numbers have grown to an estimated 35,000, well above the population size stated in the control plan and are outside of agreed zone points. This is despite a population control plan that is meant to keep numbers under 10,000 and also limit the spread of Tahr. The Authority agreed to recommend the Department achieve an immediate reduction in tahr numbers, and a review of the Tahr Management Plan to report on its failings in both number and area control. The Authority also requested that the Department report on progress on these matters at its December 2018 meeting.”  
<https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/nz-conservation-authority/updates-from-the-chair/>
- There have been some changes to membership of NZCA. Current membership is: Kerry Prendergast (interim chair), David Barnes, Gerry McSweeney, Jan Riddell, Mick Clout, Rauru Kirikiri, Mark Brough, Robyn Jebson, Tony Lepper, Nicole Anderson.

### Tahr Management

- DOC has killed 2670 tahr in and around Mt Cook National Park as part of their ongoing tahr management activity. The operation avoided bulls.
- The Minister gave a presentation to the NZDA national conference on reducing tahr populations and proposing a new prioritisation for control activities.
- I have advised DOC about tahr population biology science and tahr harvest information that will improve modelling.
- I have reviewed the research to estimate the tahr population undertaken by Dave Ramsey of the Arthur Rylah institute. The research method was robust, but data were sparse, resulting in a mean estimate of 35,000 tahr and a broad confidence interval of 17,000 ~ 54,000 tahr.
- DOC has appointed a staff member to the Twizel office to take responsibility for tahr management operations.
- Andy Roberts (DOC: Director, Operations, Eastern South Island) is leading development of a new tahr management strategy.

Date	Task	Lead
24 May 2018	South Island Tahr Workshop. Purpose: to reinvigorate the tahr programme.	Andy Roberts
30 June 2018	Assign a DOC led task team (with external members).	Andy Roberts
30 June 2018	Confirm methodology for a centrally held South Island tahr budget – to be dispersed as per agreed plan.	Andrew Reece-Jones
30 August 2018	Finalise a strategy to achieve the objectives of the HTCP 1993: Purpose of the strategy is to ensure that all parties are on an agreed approach to achieve the objectives of the HTCP.	New tahr lead
30 August 2018	Tahr Plan Implementation Liaison Group to meet with a focus on the rebuild of the functioning of the group to confirm the strategy and subsequent operational plan.	Andy Roberts
30 November 2018	Revise the Operational Plan for Tahr Control.	New tahr lead
15 December 2018	Population and outcome monitoring to be re-scoped. Including nationally co-ordinated data collection and management system (and database) to be scoped.	Elaine Wright
15 December 2018	Consider sampling off conservation land to get an accurate population density for the entire management area.	Mike Perry
ongoing	Continue with aerial surveys to improve the precision of density estimates.	Mike Perry

- The GAC was not invited to the 24<sup>th</sup> May Workshop. Three NZDA members attended by invitation.
- The GAC has been invited to join the re-constituted Tahr Plan Implementation Liaison Group.
- I published an article on tahr management in my own name in NZ Hunting & Wildlife, July 2018.
- Garry Ottmann published an article on tahr management in his own name in NZ Hunter, August 2018.
- NZDA is considering developing its own tahr management strategy.

## 2018/19 Estimates for Vote Conservation: Report of the Environment Committee July 2018

### Funding for the Game Animal Council

The Game Animal Council was set up to improve the management of deer, chamois, tahr, and wild pigs. We learned that Budget 2018 provides \$225,000 for the council.

The Minister does not consider that the council has effectively managed introduced species. She noted that the number of tahr in New Zealand has increased. We asked whether the Minister plans to disestablish the council. She told us that the council's future is being looked at, but it would not be disestablished any time soon.