

MINUTES OF THE GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING 3 JULY 2017

Held at Department of Conservation, Ōtautahi / Christchurch Office, Room 201, Level 2, 161 Cashel Street, Christchurch City Centre

Present: Don Hammond (Chair), Geoff Kerr, Garry Ottmann, Carol Watson, Roger Duxfield, Alec McIver, Richard Burdon, Rachael Dean, Stephen Hall

Jenny Wotten (Executive Officer)

Also in attendance: Terry Pierson, Ben Reddiex DOC, Chris Lord (GAC Webmaster)

1. Welcome and Introductions: Don Hammond welcomed Councillors and visitors.

Apologies: Minister Dunne & John Brinsley-Pirie, Garry Ottmann for lateness

Motion 16/1: Moved Don Hammond/Geoff Kerr: That apologies be accepted.	CARRIED
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Introduction of new Councillors – Don Hammond provided some history of the GAC for the benefit of new Councillors. He advised that Councillors are not appointed to represent their own affiliated bodies but to work as a Councillor to represent all hunter's sector interests using their knowledge, skills and background. He reminded Councillors that the GAC Meetings are public meetings and subject to the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the Minutes are publicly available on the GAC website.

Don Hammond reminded Councillors that as Chair, he is the first point of contact for people and organisations requesting information. All requests must go through him including media contact.

2. Agenda: Roger Duxfield asked that we add Crucial to Conservation to the agenda.

Motion 16/2: Moved Don Hammond/Garry Ottmann: That the agenda be amended.	CARRIED
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3. Minutes of previous meeting 20 March 2017: were taken as read with minor amendments to the Working Group report on the Ruahines (item 9b) – as advised by Geoff Kerr.

Motion 16/3: Moved Roger Duxfield/Alec McIver: that the Minutes of the 20 March 2017 Meeting be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.	CARRIED
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4. Matters arising from Minutes not on agenda:

- a. Te Urewera Board has contacted the GAC recently seeking input on the Te Urewera Te Kawa o Te Urewera Management Plan. Alec McIver to review the document and formulate a reply
Action item 16/1. Don Hammond and Alec McIver to meet with the Te Urewera Board also as soon as time allows.
- b. Roger Duxfield, Bill O'Leary & Steve McFall attended the MSC Release of 'A Hunter's Tale' in Wellington on 21 March 2017. Roger Duxfield reported that progress has been made in regard to the time taken to get temporary firearms licences.
- c. **NZCA** – Don Hammond is still to make a presentation to the NZCA. This is now scheduled for 7 August 2017. There have been new appointments to the NZCA since the June meeting so Don Hammond will be speaking to new NZCA Board members.
- d. **Tahr Project** – Garry Ottmann provided an update on the status of the Tahr Project. A draft permit has been received but negotiations around some details are continuing. James and Simon Guild have commented on it also. Jenny to send original papers to new councillors – Richard declared he sits on NZPHGA.

- e. **Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)** – Roger Duxfield reported that a CWD briefing paper was sent to organisations overseas and will be sent again closer to the start of the overseas hunting season as a reminder. Richard Burdon added that there is serious concern about the disease within the deer industry and it's vital to educate international hunters coming into NZ about how the disease is spread. CWD is in 14 states of the US already. Geoff Kerr said there were collaborative interests within NZ all working together to keep CWD out of NZ and he supplied material for an article in the latest NZ Hunter Magazine. Professional Hunting Guides are aware of the dangers and provide advice to clients so the biggest risk is associated with freedom hunters and backpackers operating outside of the professional hunting industry. Geoff Kerr requested Councillors share the message about CWD with their own contacts and affiliated organisations. Richard Burdon will work on this with Geoff Kerr. Stephen Hall spoke about the role of MPI in preventing diseases from entering the country and the methods they employ to educate the public about threats.
- f. **WARO Review** - On 2 May 2017, the Lower North Island Red Deer Foundation (LNIRDF) had its WARO case heard in court. The main focus of their complaint was decisions that had been made in the Ruahines, Tararua, Rimutaka forest parks and Wiretap reserves in the Lower North Island. Their aim was to show that hunters should have been formally consulted and that the decisions made by DOC about the Ruahines had a significant effect on hunters. They were also aiming to show that recreational hunters have a Statutory role in Wild Animal Control and should be given equal consideration (as commercial operators) in the decision making.

The High Court found in their favour saying there was a duty to consult with recreational hunters and the judge was satisfied the process had been unfair. The High Court issued a declaration that the 2015 WARO concession, and in particular the land boundaries set in the Forest Parks were invalid due to failure of natural justice. The decision has not quashed the current 2015 permit, because it considered this to be a disproportionate response given that the permit applies to the whole of the North Island (and there is only 1 year left to run).

Don Hammond discussed the Court's findings and said that we are now two years post the last WARO permits being established and the proposed WARO Review has not started which is really concerning. Don Hammond has written to the Department a number of times asking when the Review would start and the complexities associated with the Review. The Department has provided a rationale for the delays in commencing the Review. Don Hammond will write to the Department again, asking for details on their WARO Review work program, Terms of Reference and who will be responsible for conducting the Review **Action 16/2**.

- g. Ben Reddiex advised that DOC had transferred funds to GAC to meet its financial obligations as requested by the GAC. A case has been made to carry forward funds specifically tagged for the levy development into the new financial year (outcome to be known c. October).
- h. **New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA)** - Under the Game Animal Council Act 2013, the GAC or the Associate Minister of Conservation have statutory obligations to liaise with or consult the NZCA on matters relating to improving hunting opportunities and the designation and management of herds of special interest. Jenny Wotten to circulate to Councillors, a DOC information paper that was provided to the NZCA at a previous meeting when Don Hammond was to attend (Don did not attend, and the NZCA discussed the background content that was provided).
- i. **OSPRI** – Garry Ottmann raised the lack of an adequate response from OSPRI on the GAC's submission on OSPRI's recent national consultation document on pest control operations and continued lack of consultation on upcoming 1080 operations.
- j. Rachael Dean made some comments on Item 19 of the previous Minutes regarding the research work being undertaken by Eric Buentz on NZ Hunter's blood lead levels as in October 2015 she had attended a Symposium in Brussels on lead in ammunition. Some documents from that Symposium are available on COLFO's website (www.colfo.org.nz/).

5. Minutes of Conference Call 8 May 2017: were taken as read.

Motion 16/4: Moved Alec McIver/Geoff Kerr: that the Minutes of the 8 May 2017 Conference Call be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.	CARRIED
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Motion 16/5: Moved Don Hammond/Alec McIver: That the Game Animal Council seeks a binding ruling on GST payable on the game trophy export levy and any administrative fees, from IRD at a cost of approximately \$8000.	CARRIED
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6. Action items from previous

- a. 12/6 Carol Watson is continuing discussions with Kalkomey around their supply agreement and content which needs to be NZ focussed and agreed by Council.
- b. 13/1 deer repellent, bait types and research - Don Hammond has written to OSPRI CEO Michelle Edge, has already raised it with Phil Dawson.
- c. 13/5 Game Estates to review their policies in line with accepted Codes of Conduct for Animal Welfare.
- d. 13/10 Access issues around Mt Pisa Conservation Area: Geoff Kerr has continued his discussions with DOC which are covered in his report attached.
- e. 13/11 OSPRI have continued to frustrate stakeholders with their lack of consultation and engagement and the GAC continues to receive emails from disenfranchised landowners, hunters and hunting organisations.
- f. 14/5 Don Hammond and Geoff Kerr to work with Department of Conservation planners to ensure we get consistency and wording in planning documents to ensure provisions within the GAC Act are accommodated.

7. Correspondence and Feedback

Motion 16/6: Moved Alec McIver/Garry Ottmann: That inward correspondence be accepted and outward correspondence be approved.	CARRIED
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8. Sub Committees

- a. Don Hammond circulated a paper proposing Council members are appointed to current working groups as follows:
 - Statutory Processes (including AATH, WARO & HOSI): Geoff Kerr (Chair), Stephen Hall, Garry Ottmann, Don Hammond, Richard Burdon
 - Finance and Admin: Rachael Dean (Chair), Stephen Hall, Alec McIver
 - Education, Safety & Training: Carol Watson (Chair), Alec McIver, Roger Duxfield, Garry Ottmann, Rachael Dean
 - Website, Communications & Annual Reporting: Roger Duxfield (Chair), Rachael Dean, Alec McIver, Carol Watson
 - Levy & Funding: Don Hammond (Chair), Garry Ottmann, Geoff Kerr, Richard Burdon, Roger Duxfield, Carol Watson
 - Ministerial Liaison & Strategic Relationships: Don Hammond. Alec McIver will continue to work with Iwi.

Don Hammond acknowledged there will be times when councillors will need to operate in other areas and the range of tasks is likely to change over time requiring a re-allocation of roles and/or the establishment of additional working groups. The appointment of a CEO will sit under finance and administration. Promotion of GAC and the Sika Show will sit under Communications. Working group chairs are to start working on terms of reference with their teams, outlining how they will deal with their various responsibilities going forward. Geoff Kerr will divide up the Statutory Working Group work allocation.

Once the GAC Chief Executive Officer is established in the role, the councillors will be able to focus on governance matters, as per the GAC Act, with the incoming executive officer dealing with management responsibilities. Stephen Hall queried the GAC's 5 Year Plan which is now 3 years old, the strategic plan, operational plans and budget. Don Hammond advised that the focus recently has been mostly on the implementation of the levy. Jenny Wotten to circulate the most recent operational plan and budget as put together by the levy working group **Action item 16/3**.

- b. **GAC Deputy Chair** – Don Hammond advised that Geoff Kerr has been a huge support to him and he would like to re-nominate Geoff Kerr to be Deputy Chair again if he would accept.

Motion 16/7: Moved Don Hammond/Alec McIver: That Geoff Kerr be GAC Deputy Chair.	CARRIED
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9. Financial Report – 14 March to 23 June 2017

Balances – 14 March 2017

Investment – On Call	\$ 682.90
Current Account	<u>\$ 5933.74</u>
	\$ 6616.64

Plus Income

Department of Conservation	73600.00
GST Feb-March	903.43
Interest – Investment Account	<u>80.21</u>
Total Income	\$74583.64

Less Expenses

GST Apr-May	8081.24
Operational Expenses	<u>35115.71</u>
Total Expenses	\$43196.95

Balance as at 23 June 2017

Investment – On Call	\$20763.11
Current Account	<u>\$17240.22</u>
	\$38003.33

Motion 16/8: Moved Don Hammond/Roger Duxfield: That the financial report be accepted and that payments made be approved.	CARRIED
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- a. Terry Pierson spoke about per diems (\$215 per day), GST registration and withholding tax (33%). Terry needs all councillor's IRD account numbers and bank account numbers. IRD have agreed to grant exceptions and waive withholding tax in some situations, particularly for councillors who are GST registered. A tax invoice is required for all recoverable expenses.

10. DOC Update - Ben Reddiex circulated the DOC Report (attached).

- a. **Game Trophy Export Levy Project** - Don Hammond and Ben Reddiex provided some background information on the Game Trophy Export Levy Project and its current status. Consultants have drafted the steps required for the procurement process and mapped out a high level (fit for purpose) collection mechanism. DOC (on behalf of the levy steering group) is now undertaking a procurement process ensuring that those interested have an adequate understanding of the requirements.

Richard Burdon asked to be part of the Working Group and this was approved, Roger Duxfield will provide any background information Richard requires. Don Hammond is concerned about the timing and would prefer as early a start date as possible and urged the GAC Working Group members to push for an earlier date during their working group meetings. Ben Reddiex advised there will be a MOU between GAC, DOC and Customs. A communications strategy is currently being drafted. Council noted that a GAC office will need to be established and staff employed. Roger Duxfield will ensure there is contact between DOC, contractors implementing the levy collection mechanism and the GAC webmaster.

- b. **HOSI** – DOC (in consultation with the GAC HOSI working group) have engaged a contractor to create a HOSI management plan template and advice guide. The overriding considerations under the GAC Act were discussed.
- c. **GAC Act Review** – as advised previously, the departmental advice to the Minister was that the GAC Act has not been tested enough to warrant any changes this early. Jenny Wotten to distribute the “Review of the Operations of the Game Animal Council Act 2013” tabled in Parliament on 3 May 2017.
- d. **WARO** – Geoff Kerr advised that in the Lower North Island Red Deer Foundation (LNIRDF) WARO case the judge referred to the GAC as the ‘Game Animal Advisory Council’ and made other references to the GAC in an advisory role. The meeting decided that clarification with the court of these misinterpretations is unwarranted.
- e. **BfOB Update** – DOC is continuing its consultation with the GAC through regular emails and fortnightly conference calls. BfOB predator control operations do not target deer. DOC is open to adapting its predator control methods to avoid affecting hunter’s interests where this does not compromise predator control goals eg DOC has agreed to use small baits (6 gram) and low sowing rates (1 - 2 Kg/ ha) wherever possible during aerial 1080 operations. Consultation on the use of deer repellent across the Battle for our Birds programme is led by GAC and NZDA representatives at the national level. DOC is funding limited use of deer repellent targeted towards sites of greatest interest to hunters.

The principles that have been agreed to identify sites for deer repellent use are;

- Herds of special significance, or at higher risk due to smaller animal size or foraging behaviour.
- Sites where agreement has already been reached to use deer repellent through previous consultation.

At this point in time, agreement has been reached to use deer repellent during the following 2017 BFOB operations;

- Dart Valley; all of the operational area (11,000 ha approx.).
- Kaimanawa Mountains – Umukarikari; all of the operational area (11,000 ha approx.).
- Whirinaki; a portion of the operational area, agreed through consultation with local hunters (11,000 ha approx.).
- Tongariro Kiwi; a portion of the operational area, agreed through consultation with local hunters (7,000 ha approx.).

In addition, DOC understands the proposed Wilberforce, Makarora and Arthurs Pass operations are of high interest to the GAC and NZDA and consultation on potential deer repellent use for these operations is ongoing.

GAC has been instrumental in reaching agreement for use of deer repellent and is now reaping the benefits from last year’s discussions. In some situations, it hasn’t been whole areas but targeted areas have been identified through discussions with local hunters. At this stage, it is not possible to use deer repellent for every herd for both cost and logistical reasons.

Rachael Dean queried whether greater use of deer repellent was inhibited through mainly cost or mainly supply. Geoff Kerr advised that the deer repellent is produced by a sole supplier and loses its potency quickly so it needs to be made and then used early. The challenge for the GAC is to get the best outcome for game animals and hunters, and get the cost factored into DOC's BfOB's operational budget (and approved). The lower the cost of deer repellent, the more widely it can be used. Geoff Kerr commended DOC for their open and transparent relationship with the GAC on BfOB and advised that DOC is working on a media release on this issue which the GAC could put on its website.

11. Working Group updates:

- a. **Statutory Processes** – Geoff Kerr spoke about his report (attached). Geoff Kerr has spoken to Jeremy Severinson, DOC Partnerships Manager, about Tenure Reviews, - there are two sets of operating systems in place, both of which are legal. It has been explained to us that there is no right to carry firearms over the easement in Mt Pisa and that's not going to change. Geoff Kerr is going to pursue the conversation with Jeremy Severinson about how to communicate the message in a positive way and Jeremy has undertaken to compile information about similar situations and convey that to Geoff. Richard Burdon advised that each situation is unique and the terms are agreed during the Tenure Review process.

Firearms submission – The GAC made a submission to the Minister of Police on the Select Committee's report, seeking to protect legal firearms users from undue constraints. Minister Paula Bennett has subsequently made decisions consistent with the GAC position. It was encouraging to note that Minister Bennett took on board comments about how the earlier recommendations would have made life more difficult for legal firearms holders. Rachael Dean recommended Councillors read the COLFO submission on the Parliament website as they had done a lot of research on the issue.

- b. **Training & Education Working Group:** Carol Watson provided an update on the discussions being held with Kalkomey. MSC are supportive and have offered the use of their Hunter Safety video content. Kalkomey are prepared to make an NZ version of the course available however the time invested in making the relevant content specific to New Zealand needs to be balanced against revenue potential. They understand that Hunter Ed is not compulsory here as it is in the USA, therefore the uptake rate will be low in comparison. This is a 'negative' for them and for NZ hunters.

Carol Watson advised there is potential for sponsors to come on board in order to encourage participation through voucher rewards. However, the GAC currently does not have a policy around the use of sponsors so that decision will have to wait for now. The course content is free to access, a fee is charged when the participant takes the exam to receive certification and Kalkomey and GAC would share the funds. Carol Watson is looking for a longer plan, if we are to introduce some type of online hunting program what do we want this hunting certificate to mean. Health and safety aspects of what is happening in the hunting sector are relevant issues for the GAC. What are our objectives, what are we hoping to achieve here - Carol will take these questions back to the working group and prepare a paper for the next meeting.

Richard Burdon questioned how these certificates will be perceived by NZDA and other organisations that already have similar certificates. Roger Duxfield replied that hunter education is an essential part of the GAC Act and there will be opportunities at some point for sponsors to put their names to it.

12. Next Meeting Planning and Sika Show arrangements: Don Hammond has proposed the following dates:

The Sika Show is in Taupo on 30 September & 1 October 2017. Accommodation has been booked, the same as last year. Councillors are to let Garry Ottmann know if they are available to attend the Sika Show. Roger Duxfield, Richard Burdon, Stephen Hall, Carol Watson, Alec McIver, Don Hammond, Jenny Wotten have expressed interest to-date.

- Friday 10th & Saturday 11th September (2-day meeting with a focus on Strategy & Planning) venue to be advised, Jenny to look at possible venues in Rotorua.
- Wednesday 15 November - venue to be advised, possibly Wellington
- Monday 26 Feb - venue to be advised, possibly Wellington
- Wednesday 2 May 2018 – venue possibly Christchurch
- Thursday 19 July 2018 – venue possibly Rotorua NZDA Clubrooms.

Meeting papers to go out a week or 10 days ahead of meeting, reports to Jenny Wotten 2 weeks prior to Meeting dates. Working Group leaders are to collate papers for their group and ensure the templates are used.

13. General Business:

Rachael Dean advised that a Member's Bill on 'Rustling' had been pulled out of the ballot for its first reading in Parliament and asked if this was something the GAC would be interested in and would want to put on the GAC website. It relates to poaching, rustling domestic stock and game animals – not illegal hunting. Don Hammond replied that with more resourcing, the GAC would like to get involved in this and other issues such as the illegal use of firearms, provisions of the Arms Act 1983, and related provisions in the Trespass Act 1980.

Chris Lord, the GAC Webmaster, spoke about the need for new Councillors to get their photos and profiles on the GAC website and he took a photo of the new Council.

Don Hammond discussed the GAC's 2015-16 Annual report and the process going forward, looking to get a draft of the 2016-17 report put together as soon as possible **Action item 16/3**.

Don Hammond thanked DOC for hosting us in Christchurch. The meeting closed at 4 20pm.

NZ Game Animal Council

COUNCIL PAPER

DATE:	28 July 2017	FROM:	Geoff Kerr
TOPIC	Statutory Processes		
PURPOSE	Information & Discussion		
RECOMMENDATION	Accept		

Wellington CMS.

- I made a submission on behalf of GAC, essentially seeking provisions to ensure the outcomes of the Ruahine Deer Management Group can be implemented.
- Hearings are complete.

Westland NP/Mt Cook NP management plans.

- The planners are preparing “topic papers”, including a paper on “hunting”.
- No further action is required until draft plans are released late-2017.
- There is a proposal to add parts of the Godley Valley to MCNP. I have discussed this with DOC because of concerns over potential implications for hunter vehicle access. Should the proposal proceed, it will go through a full consultation process and GAC is noted as an interested party.

Other DOC Plans/Strategies

- Reviews of Fiordland NP and Mt Aspiring NP management plans will commence in late 2017.
- The Nelson/Marlborough CMS review, which has been on hold, is scheduled to recommence this year.
- The Bay of Plenty CMS review commenced March 2017.
- The East Coast/Hawkes Bay CMS is due for notification November 2017.

Department of Conservation easements:

- The GAC has received a response to its enquiry to DOC about the diversity of conditions associated with PCL access easements the Department has negotiated.
- There are two high-level systems, both of which are legal.
- Within each system, conditions vary from case to case.
- DOC is receptive to establishing a database of easement locations and conditions so that users have clarity about their rights and responsibilities.
- I am consulting with the Department about the database.

Battle for our Birds 2017/2018

- The Department has reinitiated the successful consultation process used in BfOB 2016.
- Geoff Kerr has represented the GAC at two teleconferences. Don Hammond will join as matters progress. Bill O’Leary is representing the NZDA.
- As with 2016, DOC is sharing detailed, confidential information on predator monitoring, endangered conservation values, and planned operations.
- The experience of 2016 has forged a shared trust and understanding, which is allowing rapid progress.

- BfOB 2017 will be more North Island focussed than BfOB 2016.
- DOC has independently identified some areas of high hunter interest and had already decided to use deer repellent in those areas prior to consultation with us.
- DOC has commenced consultation with some local hunter representatives to identify areas of greater hunter interest.
- There is a constraint on how much deer repellent can be produced at any time, which will present some logistical constraints.
- Discussions have identified some planned operations in areas of particular interest to hunters, but for which DOC has not already made provision for deer repellent application. Deer repellent will be used in some of those locations, but it is too early to make those decisions.
- DOC will post publicly available information on tracking levels and planned operations on their website and NZDA and GAC will help to publicise that.

CWD response:

- The GAC report in the June/July 2017 edition of NZ Hunter magazine included an extensive item on CWD.

Regional Councils

- Greater Wellington Regional Council has commenced review of their Regional Pest Management Strategy. GWRC has proactively recognised the GAC as an interested party and has undertaken to keep us informed of developments.

Ministry for Primary Industry

- No activity, except for the CWD article published in NZ Hunter.

Review of Illegal Firearms Possession

- The GAC made a submission to the Minister of Police on the Select Committee's report, seeking to protect legal firearms users from undue constraints.
- Minister Paula Bennett has subsequently made decisions consistent with the GAC position.

Ruahine Deer Management Working Group

- Investigative work streams are under way to:
 - Identify appropriate ecological targets and how ecological conditions and relative deer numbers can be monitored.
 - Identify WARO operator activities, benefits, preferences and opinions.
 - Identify recreational hunters' activities, benefits, preferences and opinions.
- There have been some changes in personnel. Allanah Irvine, who has chaired the group until now, is on maternity leave and Duncan Toogood is the new chair. Dan Adams has resigned as the chair of the Wellington Conservation Board, so his ex officio place on the group is vacant.
- The LNIRDF court case has been decided. The judge ruled that DOC should have consulted with the Foundation, but he did not impose any restrictions on helicopter activity in recognition that concessions are close to renewal.

NZ Association of Game Estates

- Geoff Kerr met with Simon and James Guild 30th May 2017 to discuss proposed minor amendments to the NZAGE industry standards document. We reached agreement and expect an amended document from NZAGE in the near future.

NZ Game Animal Council**COUNCIL PAPER**

DATE:	25 July 2017	FROM:	Geoff Kerr
TOPIC	NZ Association of Game Estates Industry Standards accreditation		
PURPOSE	Information		
RECOMMENDATION	Accept		

- I met with Simon and James Guild 30th May 2017 to discuss proposed minor amendments to the NZAGE industry standards document. We reached agreement and expect an amended document from NZAGE in the near future.

NZ Game Animal Council**COUNCIL PAPER**

DATE:	25 July 2017	FROM:	Geoff Kerr
TOPIC	Ruahine Deer Management Working Group		
PURPOSE	Information & Discussion		
RECOMMENDATION	Accept		

- There have been some changes in working group personnel.
 - Allanah Irvine, who has chaired the group until now, is on maternity leave. Allanah has done an outstanding job forming a strongly functioning group from the disparate interests around the table.
 - Duncan Toogood is the new chair.
 - Clare Veltman has left DOC, so is no longer a member.
 - Don Adams has resigned as the chair of the Wellington Conservation Board, so his ex officio place on the group is vacant.
- The LNIRDF court case has been decided. The judge ruled that DOC should have consulted with the Foundation, but he did not impose any restrictions on helicopter activity in recognition that concessions are close to renewal.
- Investigative work streams continue to:
 - Identify appropriate ecological targets and how ecological conditions and relative deer numbers can be monitored.
 - Identify WARO operator activities, benefits, preferences and opinions.
 - Identify recreational hunters' activities, benefits, preferences and opinions.

DOC Report – Game Animal Council Meeting (3 July 2017)

Game Trophy Export Levy Project

- A summary of the 114 submissions received from the game trophy export levy proposal consultation has been made available on both the DOC and GAC websites.
- Considerable work has been undertaken to support the Minister in making recommendations on how to implement a game trophy export levy by regulations.
- The levy working group and steering group have agreed to the high level service specification for a Levy Collection and Export Certificate System.
- The procurement process for the collection system is expected to commence shortly.

Herds of Special Interest

- The Department has begun work to create a herd of special interest management plan template and accompanying advice guide.
- The GAC HOSI working group have been in contact with the contractor undertaking this work.

GAC Act Review

- The “Review of the Operations of the Game Animal Council Act 2013, Report dated April 2017” was tabled in Parliament on 3 May 2017. A copy has been provided to the Council.

2015 Wild Animal Recovery Operations (WARO) process

- Last week the High Court released its decision regarding the 2015 Wild Animal Recovery Operations (WARO) process.
- The Lower North Island Red Deer Foundation (LNIRDF) submitted that DOC’s 2015 WARO process was flawed to such an extent, concessions should be cancelled or returned to what they were in 2009.
- The Court was clear DOC should have consulted recreational hunters in this case, no other relief was ordered.
- The High Court decision does provide guidance for DOC on how to undertake the next WARO permit round, which DOC will consider.
- DOC is looking forward to having a conversation with stakeholders, including recreational hunters, ahead of the next WARO permit round. The High Court decision will be used to inform this conversation.

Battle for our Birds Update

Purpose

This report is to update the GAC and NZDA on DOC’s 2017 Battle for our Birds programme, and to record the agreements reached through consultation so far.

Background

DOC is continuing to consult with representatives of the GAC and NZDA on our annual predator control programme. This builds on the constructive and effective consultation that occurred through the 2016

Battle for our Birds programme. The approach taken is to share information on proposed work early, and seek advice from GAC and NZDA to help shape the final programme.

The scope of consultation has expanded in 2017. This year's Battle for our Birds programme now includes DOC's business as usual work in addition to the beech mast response. In other words, we are presenting a single overview that captures all of DOC's planned aerial 1080 and large scale ground operations for the 2017/18 financial year.

2017 Battle for our Birds Programme

The attached maps show the 2017/18 work programme as currently planned.

This includes confirmed and proposed DOC aerial 1080 operations, as well as major ground control projects. Final operational boundaries are subject to change through consultation and in response to actual predator levels recorded on the ground. For your reference, OSPRI's 2017/18 TB vector control aerial 1080 programme is also shown (in grey).

The DOC predator control operations shown have been targeted based on the following criteria;

1. They contain highly significant ecosystems or threatened species populations that are at risk from rodents, mustelids or possums.
2. They are either due for control as part of DOC's regular schedule of pest control, or are at risk from the 2017 beech mast event.

The decision to trigger predator control is made when predator levels reach damaging levels. In most cases this is based on rodent and mustelid monitoring, although some sites are triggered based on possum modelling. Rodent and mustelid monitoring occurs in August, November, February and May. May monitoring is now complete and has allowed the following decisions to be made;

- The "Kahurangi North" and "Kahurangi West" operations have been reduced from roughly 175,000 ha to roughly 80,000 ha, due to rats still being at low levels in some areas recently treated through BFOB 2016.
- 1 aerial 1080 operation has been cancelled and removed from the map. The "Mackley" site in Westland had a "probable" risk of rodent irruption, but this has not eventuated so no pest control is needed.
- 21 proposed aerial 1080 operations have now passed their predator trigger levels, so have been confirmed. These are shown in dark green.
- 7 proposed aerial 1080 operations still have inconclusive predator tracking results, so remain as proposed. These are shown in orange. The next update for these sites will be after rodent monitoring in August.

Summary of consultation to date

Battle for our Birds predator control operations are targeting rodents, mustelids and possums, not deer. DOC is open to adapting its predator control methods to avoid affecting hunter's interests where this does not compromise predator control goals. As an example of this, it has been agreed that DOC will use small baits (6 gram) and low sowing rates (1 - 2 Kg/ ha) wherever possible during aerial 1080 operations.

Consultation on the use of deer repellent across the Battle for our Birds programme is led by GAC and NZDA representatives at the national level. DOC is able to fund a limited use of deer repellent to be

targeted towards sites of greatest interest to hunters. The principles that have been agreed to identify sites for deer repellent use are;

1. Herds of special significance, or at higher risk due to smaller animal size or foraging behaviour.
2. Sites where agreement has already been reached to use deer repellent through previous consultation.

At this point in time, agreement has been reached to use deer repellent during the following 2017 BFOB operations;

- Dart Valley; all of the operational area (11,000 ha approx.).
- Kaimanawa Mountains – Umukarikari; all of the operational area (11,000 ha approx.).
- Whirinaki; a portion of the operational area, agreed through consultation with local hunters (11,000 ha approx.).
- Tongariro Kiwi; a portion of the operational area, agreed through consultation with local hunters (7,000 ha approx.).

In addition to this, DOC understands the proposed Wilberforce, Makarora and Arthurs Pass operations are of high interest to the GAC and NZDA. Consultation on potential deer repellent use for these operations is ongoing.

Next steps

From here, the following steps are planned;

- An update on the status of proposed operations will be provided after the next round of rodent monitoring occurs in August (Project Kaka, Arthurs Pass, Wilberforce, Makarora, Dart, Southern Eyre Mountains and Waitutu).
- Consultation on deer repellent use at Wilberforce, Makarora and Arthurs Pass will occur.
- We will be in a position to begin consultation on DOC's 2018/19 predator control programme at the end of 2017. No beech mast event is predicted in 2018/19, meaning we are able to identify 2018/19 predator control priorities earlier than in the 2016 and 2017 mast years.