

MINUTES OF THE GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING 17 FEBRUARY 2016

Held at Sudima Hotel Christchurch Airport

Present: Don Hammond (Chair), Bill O’Leary, Garry Ottmann, Geoff Kerr, Mark Brough, Steve McFall, Terry Pierson, Carol Watson, Roger Duxfield, Alec McIver (apologies for lateness)

Jenny Wotten (Executive Officer),

Also in attendance: John Brinsley-Pirie, John Scurr President NZPHGA, Geoff Ensor & Mike Daisley (Mountain Safety Council)

- 1. Welcome and Introductions:** Don Hammond welcomed the Minister’s Private Secretary John Brinsley-Pirie, Mountain Safety Council representatives Geoff Ensor & Mike Daisley, Councillors and President of the NZPHGA John Scurr.

Apologies: Minister Dunne, Lou Sanson, Mike Slater, Gerald Telford, Ben Reddiex, Alec McIver (flight delays), Roy Sloan flight cancelled).

Motion 9/1: Moved Garry Ottmann /Steve McFall: That apologies be accepted.	CARRIED
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Commonalities of interest document: Don Hammond asked Councillors to identify areas of conflict that might need to be annotated including commercial interests.

- 2. Mountain Safety Council presentation:** Geoff Ensor, DOC staff & Chair, & Mike Daisley, CEO, introduced themselves and thanked Don Hammond for initiating the invitation to present to Council. Mike Daisley outlined MSC going back 50 years with its long history. They initiated a review 2 years ago, looking at how relevant their role is in today’s environment where they have 27 member organisations (including DOC, Police, ACC, Tourist industry etc) with some of them providing similar services. Following the review, they are identifying the next steps and challenges. They acknowledged the GAC and Roger Duxfield who they’ve been in contact with over many years and recognised that the environment has changed as a result of the GAC legislation with game animals now being a resource to be harvested rather than a pest to be exterminated.

Mike Daisley explained the fundamental role of the MSC is the safety of people when they go outdoors whether it is hunting, tramping, river crossing etc and commented on the role they have played for years with hunter training and licencing. The MSC Board has had a clear brief from its Council to address the change of environment within which they now work. One outcome of the review has been to appoint specialist Partnership Advisors to engage with existing and potential new stakeholders and to use the power of social media and other 21st Century communication methods to reach out to the outdoors public. Another focus has been to see what data exists within MSC and its member organisations on safety and how that data can be used. The review has given them insights into their own leadership, organisational structure, fundamental activities, governance structure etc and the challenges they now face.

The firearms licencing program has high relevance because of the compulsion for hunters to be licenced – and this is the area they want to expand on. Hunter licencing provides a point of engagement for them with stakeholders. They said that the Police and MSC are united in this quest and they’ve been advised that the police are initiating a “Firearms Review Project” - reviewing overall licencing administration and firearms framework in New Zealand. The GAC would like to find out more about this review **Action item 9/1**.

The Mountain Safety Council has appointed Matt Gibson as a Partnership Advisor. Matt Gibson has already written to the Game Animal Council and emphasised the MSC’s new approach. Don Hammond commented that hunter licencing in NZ needs to be effective, affordable and accessible

or you encourage people to operate outside the law. Geoff Kerr commented that any firearms licencing that didn't involve a practical component was not good enough, potential hunters need to learn how to handle firearms. Garry Ottmann pointed out that unlike the MSC, the GAC has a statutory responsibility for firearms safety and the development of training programs in accordance with the GAC Act.

Terry Pierson queried who the MSC reports to, as an Incorporated Society. MSC has three main funding streams: DOC, the Police and the Lotteries Commission. They have an AGM every year, elect their own Council members and report on spending to their Council and Board. The appointments involve a voting process and there are various co-options to the Board from stakeholder organisations including the Police.

Geoff Ensor and Mike Daisley said the only training they will now be delivering is through the Firearms Licencing System. They said that on a National scale there are now more people going through the system than ever before, up to 10,000 people was quoted, which raises a lot range of challenges around the delivery model. They don't want to be replicating training already delivered by other organisations such as the NZDA. They spoke about the trajectory of change in recreational hunting as being potentially huge due to the expanding population of hunters and growing tourism. Don Hammond spoke about the growing numbers of recreational hunters who are not affiliated with any organisations and the need to ensure they are trained and kept informed of safety issues. Don Hammond thanked Geoff Ensor and Mike Daisley for their attendance and presentation and said he would respond to Matt Gibson letting him know which Councillor will be responsible for being the conduit for ongoing liaison and discussion between both organisations **Action item 9/2**.

Following discussion after Geoff Ensor and Mike Daisley left, a decision was made not to seek any formal role with MSC at this stage – the GAC doesn't need to be on the MSC Council as we already have the statutory role to fulfil. The GAC's role is to advise and make recommendations to the Minister on firearms training and promote safety initiatives including firearm safety.

Motion 9/2: Moved Bill O'Leary/Terry Pierson: that GAC move into Committee.	CARRIED
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Motion 9/3: Moved Terry Pierson/Bill O'Leary: that GAC move out of Committee.	CARRIED
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Motion 9/4: Moved Garry Ottmann/Terry Pierson: that GAC write to the Minister noting our concerns about firearms licencing instruction with particular regard to Section 7 of the GAC Act.	CARRIED
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In response to Matt Gibson's email, it was acknowledged that we haven't seen what the MSC is proposing yet so we have only limited awareness of the bigger picture. We are only coming in at the end of their review process as we have not previously been consulted. The GAC would need to form a working group to initially sound out what is being proposed. Don Hammond to write to Matt Gibson inviting him to make a presentation at the next GAC Meeting in April (**Action item 9/3**).

- 3. Minutes of previous meeting 28 September 2015:** taken as read Roger Duxfield/Steve McFall. Carol Watson would like one change, page 6, in the Bowhunting paragraph, amend 'Wellington' to NBEF.

Motion 9/5: Moved Geoff Kerr/Carol Watson: that the Minutes of the 28 September 2015 Meeting be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting, with the one minor alteration.	CARRIED
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4. a. Matters arising from Minutes not on agenda

John Brinsley-Pirie from the Minister's Office spoke about the Terms of Reference being written for the Hunter Safety Review & Illegal Hunting Review. The Minister will be asking GAC to take a lead role. According to landowners there is more regular Illegal Hunting occurring. The safety of landowners needs to be recognised. There are overlaps between Hunter Safety and Illegal Hunting and some issues will be examined across both Reviews. Both deserve equal prominence but Hunter Safety has an elevated public profile due to the high number of hunter related accidents last year. The Reviews are not just about Game Animals. The Illegal Hunting is a longer term and wider ranging review.

- b. Action item 8/2 Mark Brough and Garry Ottmann have a draft policy on the use of 1080 and are in the process of refining it.
- c. Bowhunting permit conditions are now on the website.
- d. Mark Brough to develop discussion document on iwi liaison group – has sent email to begin liaison.
- e. Carol Watson has a draft press release ready to go on the online Bowhunter Training
- f. The SPCA has another case they want the GAC to be involved in. Sue Baudet has asked Garry Ottmann (and Warren Pederson) to be witnesses with the next case expected to go to court at the end of May. Garry Ottmann will circulate the Judge's sentencing notes and trial notes to other Councillors **Action item 9/4**. It's very important that the GAC doesn't condone unethical behaviour or allow people to get away with animal cruelty by claiming it is 'normal hunting practice'.
- g. Japanese Deer Research – Garry Ottmann advised that the Japanese group will be arriving in NZ on 4 March and will be visiting James Guild's hunting estate – Garry Ottmann to report back after the event **Action item 9/5**.
- h. Alec McIver and Steve McFall are working towards a post Easter date for the Parliamentary Pig Hunt. Garry Ottmann is in the early stages of planning the next Parliamentary Deer Hunt later in 2016 and will seek John Brinsley-Pirie's assistance to issue invitations within Parliament. Garry Ottmann said that he has greatly appreciated the support from Game Estates and Hunting Guides to look after parliamentarians on past hunts by providing the locations and hosting in general.

- 5. a. **Correspondence:** Don Hammond presented the correspondence list. The letter from the Minister received on 10 November regarding HOSI needs to be responded to. Unfortunately, an invitation from Te Urewera Board to attend the launch of their Statement of Priorities in Taneatua on 5 December, was received after the event. Subsequently we have been invited to locate the online link and respond to the Statement of Priorities by the closing date of 26 February 2016. **Action item 9/6** Jenny Wotten to resend the link to Councillors and Don Hammond, Alec McIver & Steve McFall will respond to Te Urewera Board by 26 February.

<p>Motion 9/6: Moved Alec McIver/Bill O'Leary: That inward correspondence be accepted and outward correspondence be approved.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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b. Action items reporting

- 7/3 Mark Brough – overtaken by the two reviews (delete)
- 8/5 need to formalise the process for GAC Act Review
- 8/8 Consultation with iwi – policy yet to be drafted
- 8/9 Don Hammond to address Conservation Authority at some point in the future
- 8/12 Geoff Kerr has communicated wording for acceptable hunting practice to stakeholders
- Garry Ottmann wants to renew the invitation to the Game Estates to attend a future GAC Meeting, **Action item 9/7** reissue invitation to James Guild.

6. Financial Matters

Terry Pierson reported on account balances.

a. Account balances –

Account Balances 25 Sept 2015	
Investment – On call	\$71,774.35
Current Account	<u>\$9,689.15</u>
	\$81,463.50
Plus Income	<u>\$453.00</u>
	\$81,916.50
Total Expenses	\$24,622.86
Balances 15 February 2016	
Investment -On Call	\$52,328.87
Current Account	<u>\$4,964.77</u>
	\$57,293.64

<p>Motion 9/7: Moved Terry Pierson/Roger Duxfield: That the financial report be accepted and that payments made be approved.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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- b. Annual Report (and Financial Statement) 2014/15:** Sent to Minister Dunne with covering letter on 21 December 2015. Financial Statement is in the process of being audited.
- c. Appointment of Auditor:** The appointment of Vivien Cotton has been the subject of previous emails and agreed by Council. It is anticipated that the auditor fees will be \$3,565 for 2014/15 and \$4,002 for 2015/16.

<p>Motion 9/8: Moved Don Hammond/Garry Ottmann: That Vivien Cotton from Cotton Kelly be appointed as the Game Animal Council's auditor for 2014/15 and 2015/16.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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- d.** John Brinsley-Pirie reported on the Cabinet Paper (GAC funding) – Budget Day has been announced, likely to be 26-27 May 2016. All indications so far are that the paperwork is all in order and payment is likely to come through as two lump sums; one for each financial year.
- e.** DOC has offered to bring in a specialist to size the job of getting the export trophy levy in place. Roger Duxfield has made good progress but the GAC is currently not adequately resourced to proceed much further. We need to ensure a single efficient process where persons wishing to export trophies can easily obtain their certificates. Steve McFall, Chris Lord and Terry Pierson have been working on the payment side with KiwiBank and the Fetch system and are fairly happy with how this is progressing. The NZPGHA Guides have offered to pay a voluntary fee in the meantime to recognise the GAC's role in supporting the hunting sector and the longer term mandatory nature of the levy.
- f.** John Scurr spoke about the voluntary levy. He wants urgent advice and direction from the GAC as he's fielding phone calls from disgruntled Guides on a regular basis. The Association voted at their AGM to pay a fee on a voluntary basis until it was officially up and running but a small body of Guides are not happy about it and feel they are an isolated group that have been asked

to fund the GAC. As most Guides are booked out several years in advance (at a pre agreed cost), they will not be in a position to pass on the levy to their clients for a few years. But it was also noted that in most cases the levy could be incorporated in the expediting and freight fees, usually undertaken by taxidermists, and the certificate issued along with the Export documentation currently required by importing countries. Don Hammond advised John that the levy on export trophies is legislated for. Don Hammond will write a letter to John Scurr and the Guides Association which states the GAC position, the reason for the levy and setting out the guiding legislation **Action item 9/8**.

- g. Roger Duxfield said that during the recent anti-hunting furore that erupted following the shooting of 'Cecil the Lion' that Bill O'Leary's commentary and Press Release provided a voice of reason and common sense that was felt as far away as Las Vegas. Roger Duxfield wanted to put on the public record his and the NZPHGA's appreciation for Bill O'Leary's input and John Scurr seconded this endorsement saying it was great that the NZDA and Bill O'Leary spoke out in support of the hunting industry.
7. a **1080 poison:** Alec Mclver said he'd heard about a planned 1080 drop around Lake Okataina, Tarawera and Rotomahana directed at wallaby and covering an area of 16,000 hectares. The GAC hasn't been advised and hunters want to know the rationale behind the drop. Alec Mclver will try to source more information about the drop, its effect on the Sambar Herd and why the GAC weren't notified. The Sambar Herd are a potential HOSI so any adverse effect on the existing herd is significant. The target is supposedly wallabies but apparently wallabies won't eat deer repellent. If it can be proven that this drop is deliberately targeting game animals, then will have some leverage under our Act and we can act. There could be big issues with pigs and possums also and it could be happening on a wider scale in other parts of the country. GAC needs to work with DOC and TB Free to find some common ground and get the best possible outcome that controls the pests they are targeting. Don Hammond to write to DOC about the 1080 drop **Action item 9/9**.
- b. Bill O'Leary has heard that there is another operation planned for the Glenorchy area and last time we were too late to have an impact. Bill O'Leary will follow this up and come back to the GAC **Action item 9/10**. He will also find out if this operation has anything to do with Beech mast.
 - c. Don Hammond had a discussion with Ben Reddiex about the upcoming Roar and is awaiting more information from DOC which he will circulate within Council and then possibly issue a Press Release about Hunter Safety **Action item 9/11**
8. **Chairman's report:** Don Hammond thanked Councillors for all the voluntary, hard work being done behind the scenes and reminded them that even though they are incredibly busy, it is important that they continue to share information within Council and routinely provide feedback.

Don Hammond spoke to the paper on the appointment of a CEO circulated in the Council papers. Council have options in the appointment of a CEO summarised as follows:

- Fixed term contracted role with a focus on getting the levy in place.
- Permanent appointment with a mandate considerably wider including the levy, getting systems and processes in place for the GAC into the future and delivery on the Strategic Plan and 5 year work programme.

To achieve either of the options above the Council can advertise widely or approach known people if it is to be a fixed term appointment. Note that as a Statutory Body, there are some controls on what we are able to do. For the appointment process, again there are potentially two main options:

- Council forms a sub-committee to carry out all parts of the process
- The process is contracted out to a third party (a recruitment agency). They would advertise, shortlist, check referees etc, but the final interviews and appointment would still require the Council Sub-committee.

In either event Council needs to appoint a sub-committee of 3-4 people to oversee the process. DOC has offered assistance with HR matters relating to the appointment process. This would be essential if carried out internally, and likely to be helpful even if an external recruitment agent was used. If carried out internally, there are cost savings, but considerable work for the sub-committee. If carried out externally, there would still be a time commitment for the Council sub-committee but costs are estimated to be at least \$15-20K, although no quote has yet been sought.

Councillors are asked to make the following decisions:

1. Appointment of a CEO for a fixed term or permanent role.
2. Council to complete the appointment process internally or externally.
3. Membership of the employment sub-committee.
4. Key KPIs for the role.

John Brinsley-Pirie from the Minister's Office advised that Mervyn English (DOC) may be able to provide some guidance. A contractor could be employed to focus solely on the levy and as a separate exercise a CEO could be employed either at the same time or later. There is a lack of clarity within the Minister's Office and DOC as to how long it will take to set up the levy and so they are doing some work at the moment on fully scoping the job. John Brinsley-Pirie undertook to follow this up and indicated he thinks it is in the realm of about 2 months taking us through to the time in mid-April when the Budget is to be finalised. If the scoping report says the process will take 6 months then running a CEO and the levies in tandem might be beyond our resources. It is acknowledged that a CEO will probably not be proficient in levies but it's important we appoint a CEO as soon as possible to help us progress our 5 Year Plan. A CEO would be responsible for monitoring the levy person to make sure they are doing their job.

In summing up the main two options to either appoint both positions at the same time or separately, Don then discussed the timing of the appointments and whether we can proceed now on the basis of expecting a positive result in the Budget. Although there is an offer from the NZPHGA to pay levies on a voluntary basis, we need to iron out the payment mechanism and formal legislative part which will help our long term funding. We currently have the option to capture these funds, with hunters just waiting to see who they pay and how much they pay. We need to have the regulations and Export Certification/payment system in place by the end of this year to capture the main export season and ideally we'd have the voluntary payments coming in well before that. The implementation of the Levy has to be our top priority. The plan at this stage is to put together a job description and KPI's and then when we hear about the funding from Cabinet, we will be all set to advertise the position. On the communication side we need to formalise and acknowledge guide's contribution **Action 9/12**.

<p>Motion 9/9: Moved Don Hammond/Roger Duxfield: that the GAC formulates a job description and KPIs for appointment of a CEO which will go ahead when we hear about the funding. CARRIED</p>

<p>Motion 9/10: Moved Don Hammond/Roger Duxfield: that GAC accepts DOC's offer to scope the size of the job required to implement the export trophy levy. CARRIED</p>
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Time frames: we should have definite confirmation of our funding in the Budget outcome (April). Councillors to write to Don Hammond (cc whole Council) by 1 March with their comments on the key qualities and experience necessary for the new GAC CEO **Action item 9/13**.

A new Working Group comprising Don Hammond (Chair), Roger Duxfield, Garry Ottmann and Alec McIver, will then collectively formulate a position descriptions and circulate this to all Councillors for further input. Some Departmental expertise will be required to advise on Public Sector employment law. The GAC will also await the scoping study that DOC are going to do to determine the size of a contract required to implement the export trophy regulations. Don Hammond also shared some comments sent in by Roy Sloan (unable to attend due to a cancelled flight) which supported the decisions made above.

9. Working Group Updates:

- a. **Statutory Processes** – Geoff Kerr spoke to the paper he prepared for the Council. Key points included; GAC is now being invited to NZ Conservation Authority meetings; liaison with DOC on game density and impact monitoring processes
- b. In December 2015 GAC received limited feedback on consultation outcomes for the Wellington/Hawkes Bay/East Coast CMS reviews. Outside RHAs, WARO will not be addressed in these plans. A draft Wellington plan is anticipated about April 2016. East Coast/Hawkes Bay will possibly be about August. DOC informed GAC that it would send initial information on the Nelson/Marlborough CMS reviews in late 2015 but nothing has arrived yet. DOC has advised us that review of the Aoraki/Mt Cook and Westland NP management plans is commencing about now. Work is proceeding on the Tongariro NP management plan, but we have not received a status update.
- c. DOC have initiated a discussion regarding monitoring of game animals in the Ruahines. GAC will be involved through the initial meeting to be held in Wellington on 4 March.
- d. Geoff Kerr is working with MPI to develop clarity around legality of trading and gifting recreational harvest. All NZ hunting magazines were sent a press release about the outcomes of the joint workshop on accepted hunting practices. Some have reported it. Geoff Kerr has invited the Police (via the Nelson Arms Office) to help clarify the boundaries around illegal hunting and firearm use. Geoff Kerr has had some involvement with the Canterbury Regional Access Group (CRAG) about statutory processes. The CRAG is a confederation of Canterbury branches of the NZDA formed in December 2015 to work on enhancing recreational hunter access to Public Conservation Land. Their main concerns are:
 - enhancing outcomes from the tenure review process;
 - retaining access and/or obtaining better access when property sales involve Overseas Investment Office approval; and
 - obtaining improved vehicle access on Public Conservation Land.

Geoff Kerr and Mark Brough have both been doing a lot of background work on these issues. Geoff Kerr to write letter to Director General seeking clarity on whether the CMS's are the place to address HOSI **Action item 9/14**.

<p>Motion 9/11: Moved Geoff Kerr/Roger Duxfield: that GAC receive the Statutory Processes Update Report.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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- e. **Export Trophy Levy** –Roger Duxfield prepared a Board paper on the Export Trophy Levy Steve McFall and the web master have been refining our online collection system using a "shopping cart" type approach. With the implementation of an export levy, anyone sending a trophy from NZ will need to have the following:
 1. Receipt proving the fees have been paid; and

2. Export Certificate which shows the trophy did not come from an endangered species in New Zealand (ie not subject to CITES – an organisation which requires membership and looks after endangered species).

DOC has agreed that the GAC can be the issuing body of Export Certificates for the game animals listed in the GAC Act. This transfer of responsibility will be notified internationally. The export certificate is proposed to be part of our receipting process. A workshop was presented to the 2016 SCI Convention in Las Vegas outlining the concept to interested parties. This Convention is believed to be the biggest hunting show in the world with significant numbers of hunters wishing to hunt in NZ in attendance. All questions were recorded. Main concerns were around who else is contributing, likely cost of levy per trophy, collection system and accessibility to a real person for questions.

Ben Reddiex has been asked to clarify contradictory advice provided by DOC. Terry Pierson has concerns that the CITES logo still requires authorisation. Currently DOC is the appointed body for issuing the certificate so this needs to be resolved. The current levy is \$47.50 and if DOC drop their levy then it will be a straight swap for hunters to pay the GAC \$50 so it won't be costing the hunters any more. Most export certificates are handled by the taxidermists who bill their client preparing their trophy. Seven exporters handle it themselves and have to pass the charge onto the clients. Don Hammond and Roger Duxfield to navigate a path forward.

Motion 9/12: Moved Roger Duxfield/Steve McFall: that GAC receive the Export Trophy Levy Report. CARRIED

- f. **Website/Communications/Liaison** – Steve McFall reported that the email system has been working well and he and Chris Lord have worked out how to make the levy system work. Steve would like to see a system whereby the Minutes can be loaded onto the website before they are ratified at the next meeting. Don Hammond said this was not possible but as we prepared a letter to the Minister immediately following each meeting then maybe that could be loaded onto the website as it provides a precis of up-to-date GAC activities. With a CEO in place the letter to the Minister could form the basis of an update to the public and stakeholders. Geoff Kerr suggested that we have a noticeboard on the website which states when the last meeting was and when the next meeting will be held so that viewers can work out when the next set of Minutes will become available **Action Item 9/15** Steve McFall.
- g. **Training & Education/Alex Gale contract** – After three redrafts of the contract, Alex Gale decided that the GAC was not taking the online training course in the direction he had originally envisaged and a decision was made not to proceed further. As a Statutory Authority it is necessary for the GAC to retain absolute control over our website and control usage and content which didn't fit with the model Alex Gale was proposing. Subsequently Alex Gale has sought endorsement of his program from the NZDA and Fish & Game. As Bill O'Leary was involved to some extent in the handling of Alex Gale's online program and is now in the same position wearing his NZDA hat, he has declared a conflict of interest which has been noted by the GAC. Terry Pierson will write to Alex Gale noting the end of negotiations **Action item 9/16**.
- h. **Other Training Issues** – Karl Bridges, a PhD student at the Auckland University Faculty of Psychology has emailed Don Hammond. He is in the process of conducting research into hunter safety, in particular "mistaken for game" incidents and he wanted to meet up with Don Hammond and discuss a white paper he contributed towards. The purpose would be to find out if there is any practical or logistical help the GAC could offer for the research, seek engagement with the research working group, discuss funding sources. Don Hammond asked Geoff Kerr to respond along the lines that unfortunately, the GAC is not in a position to offer

direct financial assistance but there would be various research funding opportunities in his discipline **Action item 9/17**. The GAC might be able to offer assistance in terms of identifying relevant people to interact with (either within or outside the GAC) and providing introductions. It was noted that Karl Bridges had also contacted Minister Dunne's Office for funding assistance.

Bill O'Leary reported that in the last couple of meetings of the interagency group, the NZPHA had sent a representative so that all the major hunting bodies are now represented as well as Police and DOC. Key projects are to improve the image of hunters and analyse incidents in the interests of safety. The recent participation by NZPHA is valued.

- i. **Progress on Bowhunting Safety Education Course** – Carol Watson met with the Bowhunters in January to explain the online course and the President of the Association has encouraged members to undertake the training and report back with the aim of endorsing it. Carol Watson has also written an article for the Bowhunter's Magazine. The online course went live on 22 January 2016 and one person has already completed the course. Carol Watson will issue a Press Release and talk to John Brinsley-Pirie to get a photo opportunity for the Minister **Action item 9/18**.
- j. **HOSI** – the Minister wrote to the GAC on 9 November 2015 regarding the criteria and process for identifying Herds of Special Interest. This document was circulated to Councillors on 10 November 2015 for comment and input to a response to the Minister. In particular, the Minister sought an understanding of how the GAC planned to determine that game animals are of 'special interest' to hunters and on what grounds, what factors the GAC was planning on taking into account when considering the animals can be 'managed' for hunting purposes and what the expected benefits are, and how the GAC will contribute to the Minister's decision that consistency with the 'overriding considerations' is achievable.

The Minister's letter raised a number of other issues that the GAC needs to respond to.

The GAC is currently lacking the resources to make much headway with designating HOSI and more urgent priorities have unfortunately delayed further progress. The GAC needs to identify some commonalities and put these down on a template/management plan to be provided to people to complete. The GAC has been alerted to several possibilities including Sika, Wapiti, Tahr, Sambar (Rotorua) and Rakaia red deer.

The two most advanced plans that we are aware of are for the Sika and Wapiti herds. To progress these we need to agree a template with DOC on how they will be presented to the Minister. It would be very ambitious to develop two proposals at the same time and this may be beyond what we could reasonably achieve. John Scurr advised the GAC that he has had phone calls from helicopter operators saying they haven't been consulted over HOSI and they feel they don't have representation in the GAC. Geoff Kerr responded that GAC has not carried out any consultation over HOSI yet, the criteria are on the GAC website and groups are preparing their own nominations for GAC to assess.

- k. **Ruahine WARO Review** - During the last 3 months of 2015, the GAC wrote numerous letters to the Minister, Lou Sanson and Mike Slater asking for a complete review of WARO with the aim of Game Animals being treated as a resource rather than a pest. There were two separate issues on the table (1) the Review of Ruahine specifically and (2) a complete review. The Department took advice from the GAC and the Lower North Island Hunter Liaison Group and undertook to overturn its decision on the Ruahines. In his letter dated 28 October 2015, Mike Slater advised

that the longer term review process was the avenue for discussions regarding the wider lower North Island Conservation land.

Considerable time and work was undertaken behind the scenes in an attempt to achieve a good outcome for recreational hunters in the Ruahines. On 21 December 2015 the GAC received advice from DOC that the main changes to the permit conditions for the Ruahines would be reversed, but other areas would remain as previously advised. Most importantly, the Department noted the need to progress the full review of WARO.

At the beginning of 2016 the GAC was given relatively short notice of a Deer Monitoring Meeting to be held in Palmerston North. The GAC and other organisations felt it was too short notice and so the meeting was deferred until 4 March 2016 in Wellington. It is imperative that the GAC is represented at this meeting as key decisions could be made. Geoff Kerr and Garry Ottmann will represent the GAC (and possibly Don Hammond). Allannah Irvine, Operations Manager, Manawatu District, Department of Conservation has indicated the meeting will be chaired by Don Adams, Chair of the Wellington Conservation Board.

Similar to the WARO Review, the GAC needs to identify which Councillors will be responsible for engaging with DOC once the Terms of Reference for this Review come through. Don Hammond advised Councillors to ask for any requests for information in writing rather than responding to verbal questions which could be misinterpreted. Don Hammond emphasised that we should now be concentrating our limited resources on the 3 year wider review process instead of getting bogged down by smaller past issues. Geoff Kerr to write some key pointers, issues and options arising from the Wellington meeting paper for next meeting **Action item 9/19**.

- 10. Next Meeting Planning:** The next meeting will be held in Wellington on Wednesday 27th April 2016 and following that 29th June 2016 (location to be advised), then another meeting in August 2016 following the Tahr Show. Jenny Wotten to talk to DOC about using their room for the Wellington Meeting.

Meeting closed at 4 pm.