Taupō Fishery Advisory Committee Meeting.
Turangi DOC Office, Thursday 11 April 2024, commencing at 5.30pm.

Agenda.

1. **Welcome.**

2. **Apologies.**

3. **Minutes of previous meeting.**

4. **Matters arising.**

5. **Correspondence.**

6. **DOC Fishery Management Team updates:**

6a - Managers report:	Dave Conley – written report
6b - Licence Sales update:	James Barnett – charts
6c – Communications update:	James Barnett - written report
6d – Technical update:	Mark Venman – written report
6e – Operations update:	Aaron Sargent – written report

7. **Agenda Items:**
   7a – Update on the Angler Notice (DOC).
   7b – Gold clam incursion control (DOC).
   7c – Tongariro River track (Julian).
   7d – Motuoapa fishing competition (Bob).

8. **Verbal reports.**

TALTAC (Chair TFAC)	Julian Proctor
Taupo Fishing Club	Russell Graham
Waitahanui Anglers…	Shirley Fraser
Tongariro River Advocates	Richard Kemp
Motuoapa Boating…	Bob Crompton
TNTCS	Mike Fransham
Taupo Launchmen's…	Simon Jolly
NZPFG	Dave Wood
National Angling…	Johannes Krill in place of Ian Rodger
Fish & Game NZ	Debbie Oakley (National Council) Matt Osborne (Eastern Region)

9. **Next meeting.**

RECOMMENDATION: That the information be received and noted.

Agenda: 6 DOC Fishery Management Team updates.

Item: 6a – Operations Manager Taupō Fishery
Dave Conley

Blink and miss it, another summer is in the books and the duck season is just around the corner. Speaking to the team there is a real sense of achievement looking back at some good weather, great fishing, and some significant progress on some major maintenance projects. As such a number of staff are taking advantage of the break between seasons and have headed away for some much-needed R & R, before the winter angling and monitoring seasons fire up.

As indicated in Mark's report, the pre-season information from the November acoustic surveys has been borne out, with good if not spectacular fish being experienced by lake anglers, which is indicative of the lake productivity being in a good place.

The team have been able to maintain a pretty strong presence out and about on the big lake as well as Lake Otamangakau, and the general sentiment of anglers have been positive. The summer did kick off with a bit of a bang for us, with some very astute observations from several members of the team quickly pointing to a possible threat to the data security of unwitting freshwater anglers nationwide. Immediately before Christmas we became aware of an online "consultancy service" which purported to offer anglers a service involving buying licences on their behalf in return for a commission. In effect this was a phishing scam, under the name of the Fish Assistant, which looked like an attempt to collect credit card details from anglers. As is referenced in James' report, this was quickly bought to a satisfactory conclusion in conjunction with Fish and Game, but serves as a reminder to us all of the risks around online commerce.

On a less positive note, at Easter we were alerted to a Gold Clam incursion in the Taupo District. Whilst not all bad news, given the incursion appears to be contained at this point, we all need to be vigilant to the threat and continue to both practice check clean dry, as well as preach it to others. Our team has done some heavy lifting on that regard over the summer, as is shown by the number of surveys we have completed as part of spreading the message about this new threat. Even as the summer boating and event season comes to a close the threat does not go away, and we will continue to support the CCD messaging as we move into winter.

Other positives over the summer has been the maintenance to our Waipa fish trap that has been completed thanks to the benign run of weather, and the ongoing work to provide for a tamper-proof fish trap at Te Whaiau, which will free up a large amount of ranger resources to be deployed elsewhere. As always the team has done a great job in chasing efficiencies and better ways of undertaking our monitoring work, as the information it provides is critical to our management approach.

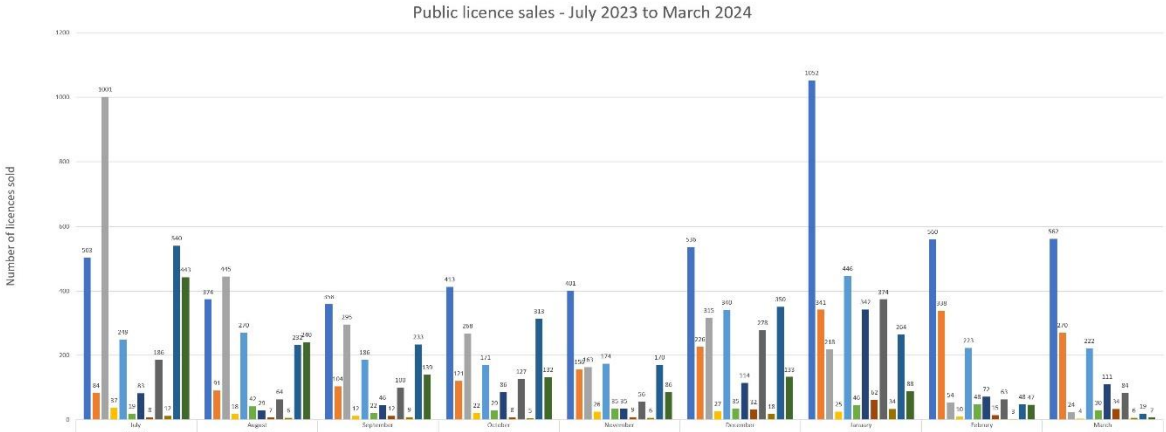
And finally, just to bring to the attention of the Committee that there is potential for some significant changes in the immediate future with regard to the structure of the local district offices here at DOC. As many will be aware, the current government has requested our department to return a saving of 6.5% across the board, and whilst at the time of writing this there is no certainty to share with the committee, I think it is important to flag it as something to discuss at our meeting. We are expecting some announcements with regard to savings options on April 10th, so when we meet on the 11th I may be able to describe any proposals that may have an impact on activities within the purview of the committee. Whilst it is my expectation that fishery activity is not in scope, given that the fishery is funded from anglers by way of licence fees, there may be potential for other more indirect or peripheral impacts.

RECOMMENDATION: That the information be received and noted.

Item: 6b – Licence sales data
James Barnett

Larger charts attached – see Appendix 1.

1. Online public sales.



	July 2023-07	August 2023-08	September 2023-09	October 2023-10	November 2023-11	December 2023-12	January 2024-01	February 2024-02	March 2024-03
Adult 24 Hour	503	374	358	413	401	539	1052	560	562
Adult 24 Hour (NR)	84	91	104	171	156	226	241	238	270
Adult Season	1001	445	295	298	153	315	218	64	74
Adult Season (NR)	27	18	12	22	26	27	25	10	4
Adult Week	249	270	186	171	174	340	446	223	222
Adult Week (NR)	99	42	33	29	55	35	46	48	30
Child 24 Hour	83	29	46	86	35	114	242	72	111
Child 24 Hour (NR)	8	7	13	8	9	30	67	15	34
Child Season	186	64	100	127	56	278	374	65	84
Child Season (NR)	22	9	9	5	9	28	34	3	6
Family Season	540	292	233	313	170	350	364	48	39
Senior Citizen Season	443	240	139	132	86	128	88	47	7

2. Online agent sales.

	July 2023-07	August 2023-08	September 2023-09	October 2023-10	November 2023-11	December 2023-12	January 2024-01	February 2024-02	March 2024-03
Adult 24 Hour	86	89	84	126	77	100	141	77	96
Adult 24 Hour (NR)	28	58	25	56	138	107	162	104	160
Adult Season	214	89	52	64	38	55	22	14	9
Adult Season (NR)	4	4	1	4	4	5	13	1	1
Adult Week	67	42	45	36	44	73	77	41	39
Adult Week (NR)	3	9	10	11	17	10	21	11	10
Child 24 Hour	33	17	8	10	21	16	26	3	15
Child 24 Hour (NR)	5	5	2	1	7	11	11	5	8
Child Season	56	22	28	44	20	58	57	15	7
Child Season (NR)	9	1	0	2	1	15	4	0	2
Family Season	146	51	57	41	25	43	29	6	7
Senior Citizen Season	129	54	45	40	36	30	25	9	5

RECOMMENDATION: That the information be received and noted.

Item: 6c – Communications and community.
James Barnett

The busy summer period posed a significant biosecurity risk to Lake Taupō and the Taupō trout fishery. Our role in the coordinated response revolved around education and advocacy. This work extended beyond the angling community, to include a variety of recreational boat and jet ski users, as well as broader outreach to local businesses and retailers. The work of our dedicated Invasive Species Threats Ranger is outlined in agenda item 7b below.

Summer editions of the Taupō Fishery Focus newsletter carried gold clam stories to over 14,000 subscribers, keeping the angling community up to speed with latest developments. Our survey data confirmed trout anglers had a much higher awareness of gold clams than other recreational lake users.

We also focussed on sharing technical fishery information that could improve understanding of the fishery and increase enjoyment for anglers. This included a detailed summary of our analysis from the Waipa spawning trap, a snapshot of our summer lake surveys and a review of the lake productivity survey. Another interesting technical story highlighted the trout diversity research undertaken by Georgia Third, A PhD student from Auckland, in partnership with the University of California Santa Cruz.

Other notable communications work covered the regulation changes which are still relatively new at Lake Otamangakau – introduced July 2022. We particularly highlighted the February closure and the reasons behind the change, as well as celebrating reopening 1 March.

Work is already underway preparing for the 2024/25 season. A teaser for the photo competition has already been released and the official launch is scheduled for Monday 15 April. This will involve a variety of communication channels including a special edition of our newsletter. Ongoing promotional work related to the photo competition provides a great platform to build awareness of the new fishing season.

Just before Christmas we became aware of an overseas online service 'The Fish Assistant NZ' illegally selling Taupō fishing licences to anglers. We notified Fish & Game to see if they also were impacted. Initially they were not aware of the issue, however they quickly discovered a number of cases. This led to a coordinated response, which resulted in complimentary media releases from both organisations and an intervention by CertNZ which blocked the Google ad campaign the scammers were using to reach anglers.

Finally, we are carrying out a review of the Taupō fishery licence sales platform, with a view to improving the purchaser experience and reducing the current administrative burden.

RECOMMENDATION: That the information be received and noted.

Item: 6d – Technical update
Mark Venman

Easter weekend saw the end to our summer monitoring on Lake Taupo as the trout start to congregate at the river mouths over coming months and our focus then turns to the rivers. Overall, the summer of 2023/24 was good with some impressive catch rates. Despite the presence of numerous recovering trout amongst the early summer catch, anglers did their part and harvested good numbers of trout this summer. Average sizes and weights are consistent with more recent years but obviously down on those from the exceptional summer of 2021/22. Jigging remained the preferred method followed by trolling with lead lines. Average satisfaction scores were up slightly for trout size and catch rates compared to the previous summer with angling enjoyment remaining high. The presence of jet skis was the main detraction cited by lake anglers this summer.

Catch rates were also impressive this summer at Lake Otamangakau with anglers averaging 1 trout (longer than 350mm) every 2 hours. The overall percentages of fish kept and those returned this summer were very similar to those from the previous summer. The percentage of trout kept by anglers was up slightly this summer while the percentage of fish caught and released under 350mm has remained stable. There was a small drop in the percentage of fish in the 350-550mm range this summer while we saw a small increase in the percentage of larger fish greater than 550mm that were released. The small number of rainbow trout kept by anglers this summer averaged 465mm and 1.37kg. Local anglers made up the largest percentage of NZ based anglers followed by Wellington, Bay of Plenty, Whanganui and Auckland anglers. Overseas anglers accounted for approximately 10% of the anglers interviewed this summer with Australian anglers accounting for the highest percentage of overseas anglers followed by UK, USA and Denmark.

A short summary of last winter's drift dives counts is also included and indicates peak counts occurred during September and October for the TT, lower Whitikau, Waiotaka & Waimarino rivers with the Hinemaiaia peaking earlier in August. Overall, the peak counts are comparable with those from the winter of 2022 with the exception of the Tauranga Taupo which was exceptional during 2022. Our counts will commence again this winter in July.

Detailed report, see Appendix 2.

Item: 6e – Operations update
Aaron Sargent

On Annual Leave. A summary of operations and compliance activity will be tabled at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That the information be received and noted.

Agenda: 7 Committee Agenda Items.

Item: 7a – Update on the Anglers Notice (DOC).

With the new season already on the horizon the Taupō fishery management team is working to progress the previously agreed regulation changes. Work is underway to finalise changes, ready to formally submit an Anglers Notice to the New Zealand Gazette.

Details in Appendix 3

Item: 7b – Gold clam incursion control (DOC).

The Taupō fishery management team has continued to work closely with other agencies to prevent gold clam from invading Lake Taupō and surrounding catchments. Advocacy and education have been cornerstones of our response over summer, with a dedicated Invasive Species Threats Ranger employed. Work focussed on increasing public awareness of invasive gold clams and emphasising the importance of MPI's Controlled Area Notice for the Waikato River and the key preventative role played by Check, Clean, Dry. In addition, we reached out to many local businesses involved with recreational activities on the lake to amplify key messaging to their customers.

Recently gold clams were positively identified at Taupō Aqua Park, an enclosed water park on the outskirts of Taupō. The infestation appears to be dense suggesting it has been present for two or three years. Inspections at neighbouring sites found no clams present.

Item: 7c – Tongariro River track (Julian).

Information about an important track that will benefit anglers.

Item: 7d – Motuoapa fishing competition (Bob).

Highlight the results from the recent Motuoapa fishing competition that took place over the Wellington Anniversary weekend.

RECOMMENDATION: That the information be received and noted.

Agenda: 8 Verbal Reports

TALTAC (Chair TFAC)	Julian Proctor
Taupo Fishing Club	Russell Graham
Waitahanui Anglers…	Shirley Fraser
Tongariro River Advocates	Richard Kemp
Motuoapa Boating…	Bob Crompton
TNTCS	Mike Fransham
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National Angling…	Johannes Krill in place of Ian Rodger
Fish & Game NZ	Debbie Oakley (National Council) Matt Osborne (Eastern Region)

Agenda item: 9 – Next Meeting

To be agreed.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Licence sales graphs.
- Appendix 2 – Technical report.
- Appendix 3 – Draft Anglers Notice review.

RECOMMENDATION: That the information be received and noted.