

MINUTES OF THE GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING 16 DECEMBER 2016

Held at DOC Office 70 Moorhouse Ave, Addington, Christchurch

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

Jenny Wotten (Executive Officer)

Also in attendance: Minister Dunne, John Brinsley-Pirie, Ben Reddiex DOC, Andy Roberts DOC, Simon Guild NZAGE, Grant Bunting Secretary NZPHA, Ross Millichamp & Mike Cuddihy

1. Welcome and Introductions: Don Hammond welcomed Councillors and visitors. Minister Dunne, John Brinsley-Pirie, Andy Roberts and Simon Guild joined the meeting later.

Apologies: James Guild, Jonathan Wallace.

Motion 13/1: Moved Don Hammond/Terry Pierson: That apologies be accepted.	CARRIED
--	---------

Don Hammond amended the agenda.

Motion 13/2: Moved Mark Brough/Garry Ottmann: That the agenda be amended.	CARRIED
--	---------

Ben Reddiex explained the Health and Safety procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.

2. Minutes of previous meeting 26 September 2016: were taken as read.

Motion 13/3: Moved Terry Pierson/Steve McFall: that the Minutes of the 26 September 2016 Meeting be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.	CARRIED
--	---------

3. Matters arising from Minutes not on agenda:

- a. Councillors to send through any updates to Commonalities of Interest.
- b. Bait types research – Ben Reddiex to provide further information about bait types used in BfOB. Steve McFall queried what work has been done (by OSPRI and others) and what research is available regarding baits, repellent and its attraction for pigs. A discussion followed with the outcome that Don Hammond and Garry Ottmann will write to DOC and OSPRI asking what progress they have made on deer repellent **Action item 13/1**.
- c. BOP Regional Council – Don Hammond advised the BOP Regional Council is in the early stages of preparing their pest strategy and we’re in the loop now having met with them.
- d. Illegal Hunting - no progress has been made on this as yet. Roger Duxfield is looking into this.
- e. Roger Duxfield spoke about the NZPHGA Training Manual and responded to Councillor’s queries following circulation of the Manual earlier. The NZPHGA has put 54 people through the course but not all have been successful in passing.

Motion 13/4: Moved Bill O’Leary/Alec McIver: that the GAC endorse the NZPHGA Training Academy as currently presented with a requirement for the NZPHGA to notify the GAC when the Training Manual is amended, thus providing the GAC the opportunity to review any changes.	CARRIED
--	---------

Action item 13/2; Don Hammond to write to NZPHGA to advise that their Training Manual has been endorsed but with the requirement for them to notify the GAC whenever it is amended.

- f. The GAC cannot progress consultation with Te Urewera Board as much as it needs to within current resources. However, Alec McIver has been in touch with them and advised that they

are planning on putting \$8m into pest control. They are also going to implement the Dog Control Policy that we assisted them with developing. Alec McIver will continue working with Te Urewera as time allows, assisting where possible with development of policies and procedures around trapping, huts etc. The GAC has also been invited to an upcoming meeting. Alec McIver will continue to liaise with them and try to ascertain what they are planning for deer and pig control and when they will implement the “use of dogs policy”.

- g. Don Hammond is still looking for an opportunity to talk to the New Zealand Conservation Authority. Geoff Kerr asked for this to be prioritised **Action item 13/3**; Don Hammond to write to the Conservation Authority and request a meeting with them.
- h. Clarification around CMSs – Geoff Kerr advised that some development has occurred around upcoming CMSs and National Park Management Plans. Ben Reddiex noted that he would pass on GAC comments regarding GAC’s interest in the wording regarding Herds of Special Interest and game animals in planning documents. It was identified that these plans need a standard clause (or provision) for them to consult GAC during their first draft stages. This will also have the benefit of educating planners of the existence of the GAC.
- i. HOSI - There is a possibility that the Sika Foundation could overtake the GAC on planning with the development of HOSI templates. DOC is considering how to resource this work (development of a template and guidance document) which would provide useful instructions for both the Sika and Tahr groups. It was agreed that we need to develop the templates as soon as possible.
- j. Correspondence regarding access easement provisions – Geoff Kerr spoke to his paper on this issue, including reference to the Mt Pisa Station case. Don Hammond queried the terminology used by DOC and confirmed that we should seek consistency of terminology and approach by DOC.
- k. Toxins and 1080 Policy – A draft has been circulated and feedback received. Our aim should be to have a clear policy, incorporating our rationale and ensuring the GAC is seen to be supporting its Mission Statement. Geoff Kerr was tasked with finalising the wording.

<p>Motion 13/5: Moved Don Hammond/Roger Duxfield: that Councillors approve the GAC policy on toxins and the use of 1080 and display the policy on the GAC website.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
---	----------------

- l. Carol Watson spoke to her paper re the MSC’s publication “A Hunter’s Tale”. A trend identified is that people born in the 1950s and 60s have a high incidence of accidents. Carol advised that the next stage is to look at causal factors based on evidence rather than opinion. Don Hammond thanked Carol Watson for representing the GAC at MSC meetings. Corroboration of the MSC hunting statistics could be useful for some of the Reviews the Minister has requested.
 - m. Don Hammond has written to Mike Slater asking where the WARO Review is up to as we are now half way through the review period and nothing has happened yet.
 - n. Hunter Education. Carol has had discussions with Kalkomey to find a way to get ahead. They will take content we provide them with and cross reference with their data for content of NZ specific training.
- 4. Andy Roberts, Director of Operations, DOC– discussion about:**
- threatened species - methods of monitoring species and how effective they are and who is responsible for the monitoring and reporting,
 - tahr operation planning, coordinating East Coast and West Coast,
 - whether too many tahr cause erosion, the importance of monitoring the effect of tahr and their impact on vegetation,
 - large scale 1080 programmes,

- large scale rabbit control measures.

GAC has made an application to DOC to hold tahr on game estates outside the feral range. The main driver for this is to reduce conflict between guided and recreational tahr hunters. Andy Roberts advised that DOC has received the proposal and it would now be considered. Don Hammond highlighted some key issues surrounding this proposal including that tahr is an iconic species and a key drawcard for hunters coming to NZ. Roger Duxfield thanked Andy Roberts and noted the hunting community is keen to progress and support this initiative and assist where possible. Both DOC and GAC are encouraged by the good will and ease of communication between those involved in this pioneering opportunity.

5. Matters arising:

- Draft proposal to hold tahr on registered Game Estates outside of the feral range - Garry Ottmann gave detail about sourcing and tagging of bulls at a cost of \$15,000.

<p>Motion 13/6: Moved Garry Ottmann/Geoff Kerr: that the GAC approve the initial research project budget for holding tahr outside the feral range on Game Estates.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
---	----------------

- Firearms licencing (item 13c) – Bill O’Leary provided an update on the two options being considered:

- small number of instructors covering all the country; or
- local training provided by registered instructors

Bill O’Leary also gave an outline on registering of the new Firearms Council which focuses on safety and clear instruction. Expressions of interest for training providers have been called for, and these are being considered by way of tender.

- Garry Ottmann advised that the 2016 Parliamentary Hunt was very successful again with lots of positive feedback. **Action item 13/4;** write to those who provided the properties to thank them for their generosity, providing a unique and special experience for MPs and their families. Don Hammond thanked Garry Ottmann for organising the hunt.
- AATH - Ben Reddix and Garry Ottmann to discuss at a later date.

6. Action Items from previous meetings

Garry Ottmann spoke about Codes of Conduct for Animal Welfare and commonly accepted hunting practices. Some Game Estates have comprehensive policies regarding animal welfare but others should be advised to review their policies in line with accepted Codes of Welfare **Action item 13/5.**

- DOC Update:** Ben Reddix circulated a report (see DOC report attached) covering Export Trophy Levy project, HOSI, GAC appointments process, GAC Act review, ammunition importation data and a BfOB update. The GAC made some suggestions regarding the GAC Act review. It was noted that the report has yet to be tabled in Parliament. Amongst other subjects covered, Ben spoke about ammunition importation data (from Customs). The Council then discussed both commercial and recreational hunters contributing financially to the cost of the Council. Ben Reddix undertook to provide further information to Council on the programme outcomes following the completion of the current round of BfOB operations and associated monitoring.

Geoff Kerr commended DOC on cancelling some of their planned control operations once their monitoring data indicated pest populations had not risen as expected. This confirms the benefits of using sound science and data to support each operation. The GAC is pleased that as a result of representations from hunter interests, including GAC input, OSPRI has amended some of its operational plans. GAC acknowledges the need for pest control operations to protect native

species, but will continue to advocate for operations to be designed to minimise the impact on game animal populations.

AATH Code of Practice – Ben Reddiex noted some errors contributing to the delay in progress on the AATH Code of Practice provided by the GAC. The Department is now working to advance this matter, but noted that putting the COP into regulations, has proven more difficult than originally envisaged. There was some discussion around existing concessions arrangements. Both GAC and the Minister are keen to see the AATH code of practice progressed as quickly as possible.

- 8. Minister Dunne address to Council:** Don Hammond thanked the Minister for his ongoing support of Council and attendance at GAC Meetings. Minister Dunne acknowledged the work of Council over the last 3 months including the Sika Show and considered documentation coming out of Council covering a large range of issues. He emphasised again that the GAC's main priority should be to implement the levy system. It was noted in discussion that other funding avenues will need to be investigated. The Minister thanked Councillors, observing that a new Council will be appointed in April, and confirmed his intention that some appointments would be rolled over to ensure continuity. Minister Dunne thanked Council for its feedback regarding the required review of the GAC Act that identifies some aspects that could be improved and anomalies between the GAC Act and other legislation that would benefit from concurrent review. However, it was noted that many sections of the Act have not been adequately tested yet, so it would be premature to conduct an in-depth review at this stage.

Don Hammond observed that the conflicts between the GAC Act and the WAC Act need to be addressed and the incoming Council could make this a priority. The GAC Act classifies all deer, tahr, chamois and wild pigs as game animals even though we can only manage those that are in a Herd of Special Interest. The WAC Act (GAC Act consequential amendment) only classifies animals as game animals when they "are part of a herd designated to be a herd of special interest" under the GAC Act.

It is the Minister's intention to set key performance targets for the GAC in 2017, including progress on funding, HOSI, AATH, illegal hunting and the Hunter Safety Review. The relevance and collation of existing data remains an obstacle for the hunter safety review and liaison with the Police and judicial system are tasks that require considerable resources. It was noted that Federated Farmers have provided statistics that in the last 12 months, 46 per cent of farmers reported poaching incidents. Farmers say it is daunting and frightening, hearing gunshots at night and/or confronting people with rifles who had no permission to be on their land.

The Minister noted the several failed attempts to fly over Fiordland due to inclement weather but he is determined to keep trying during 2017. Don Hammond thanked the Minister and John Brinsley-Pirie for their attendance.

9. Financial Matters

Financial Report

Account Balances – 23 Sept 2016

Investment – On Call	\$40585.34
Current Account	<u>\$15892.85</u>
	\$56478.19
Plus Income:	
Interest on Investment Account	<u>\$ 85.50</u>
Total Income	\$56563.69
Less Expenses	\$33945.45

Balances – 14 Dec 2016

Investment – On Call	\$ 745.84
Current Account	<u>\$21786.90</u>
	\$22532.74
Income Due:	
GST Refund	\$ 1003.59

Motion 13/7: Moved Terry Pierson/Garry Ottmann: That the financial report be accepted and that payments made be approved. CARRIED

- a. Don Hammond thanked Terry Pierson and Jenny Wotten for their work on the finances. Additional work has now been undertaken on the Trophy Export Levy from funds provided through the Budget. There is a redrafted GAC budget for the January to June 2017 period in response to resource constraints. Expenditure will be broken down in a subsidiary report for future meetings. **Action item 13/6;** Jenny Wotten and Terry Pierson to prepare a report to identify where the \$33,945.45 of Expenses has been spent. Budget Jan to June 2017 needs to be approved although it will be challenging to do so without knowing the impact of potential levy income and expenses. Ben Reddiex advised we should be aiming to nail down a good portion of our expenses by February 2017, identifying expenses for projects such as HOSI, holding tahr on game estates, etc. as well as administrative expenses that will keep the Council going until 1 July.
- b. The Council consulted Ben Reddiex on accessing the balance of funds still available from the Budget allocation to get the levy up and running. He advised that question should form part of our discussion with the Minister in early February, but said that about \$130,000 had been committed thus far for export levy work. Terry asked if our costs for Trophy Export Levy meetings so far should be charged back to DOC. Don says it's academic as they are all GAC expenses. The Council questioned whether unspent funds roll over at the end of the financial year or are returned to the consolidated account. Carol Watson asked that funds spent to-date on the Trophy Export Levy implementation be quantified if possible (expenditure paid out by GAC might be able to be quantified through Banklink – **Action item 13/7;** Jenny Wotten to investigate.)

10. **Simon Guild, President, New Zealand Association of Game Estates (NZAGE):** Simon addressed the Council. Current membership is 15 estates, with a 1000 acre minimum requirement (400 hectares). Members are obliged to operate under industry agreed standards, introduced in 1998 and since modified 6 times, most recently in 2015. Members are fully re audited every 3 years (operational and property) and receive a full report with recommendations. DOC have repeatedly refused to be involved in ratification or development of the industry standards, despite game estates being governed by the WAC Act, which is of concern to the NZAGE. The NZAGE would much prefer regulation to allow them to enforce and censure non-compliant properties and reward compliant properties. The NZAGE believes it would be beneficial for the GAC to endorse the NZAGE standards.

Following Simon Guild's presentation there was further discussion about the process to be followed to progress game estate industry standards. It was agreed that there was benefit to NZAGE in having its standards endorsed by the GAC and it would be preferable if that happened with some urgency. The GAC accepted that the standards had been developed with care.

A new working group was formed comprising Bill O'Leary, Roger Duxfield, Geoff Kerr and Garry Ottmann. They were tasked with reviewing the standards and making a recommendation as to

whether the GAC should endorse them, subject to GAC being notified of any subsequent significant change or modification. Possible benefits of GAC endorsement include providing support for:

- communicating with DOC on standards governed by the WAC Act
- regulation of the environment so that the NZAGE can enforce and censure non-compliant properties and reward compliant properties.

Motion 13/8: Moved Bill O’Leary/Alec Mclver: That a GAC working group review the NZAGE Standards and make a recommendation as to whether the GAC should endorse them, subject to GAC being notified of any subsequent significant change or modification. CARRIED

(Councillor Garry Ottmann abstained from voting on this motion as he has been involved in preparing some aspects of previous versions of the standards.)

- 11. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD):** Simon Guild provided a presentation about CWD in deer (which is similar to mad cow disease in cattle) following a meeting arranged by Deer Industry NZ and also attended by Geoff Kerr and Terry Pierson. CWD has recently appeared in Norway. Deer Industry NZ, in conjunction with MPI, is responsible for disseminating information within NZ. The GAC will help to get the information out through recreational hunting magazines and affiliated hunting organisations. It is important that the GAC continues its input to the national risk assessment process, helps communicate with unaffiliated recreational hunters, and puts information about CWD on the GAC website. **Action item 13/8;** Geoff Kerr to write a brief for the hunting magazines.

Don Hammond thanked Simon Guild for attending the meeting.

- 12. Export Trophy Levy** – Don Hammond and Ben Reddiex provided an update on the progress of the levy. The consultation document for the Export Trophy Levy was officially published in early December, seeking submissions by 13th February 2017. While the implementation of the Export Trophy Levy is vital to the ongoing sustainability of the Council, one of the first tasks for a fully funded Council is to seek ways for the recreational sector to also contribute to supporting the Council, which affords benefits to all hunters.

Don Hammond advised that following analysis of the submissions received, GAC would make a recommendation to the Minister within approximately 6 weeks, with a plan for levy implementation in the second half of 2017. Bill O’Leary has some concerns about the process of making a submission because submitters don’t have to self-identify a financial/commercial interest. Don Hammond responded that he expected the consultation stage would result in some constructive arguments for and against the proposal. Don thanked Ben Reddiex, DOC, Nick Carlaw and Joy Tracey for the work done to date, which has been critical to get us to this stage. Ben Reddiex also acknowledged the input of councillors on the Working Group.

- 13. Correspondence:** Garry Ottmann queried whether Molesworth Committee had a meeting date yet. Bill O’Leary to let him know.

Motion 13/9: Moved Mark Brough/Steve McFall: That inward correspondence be accepted and outward correspondence be approved. CARRIED

14. Working Group Updates

- a. **Statutory Processes:** Geoff Kerr provided a verbal report on the draft Wellington DOC Conservation Management Strategy providing enabling statements around Ruahines. **Action item 13/9;** need to put on our website that the Wellington CMS is out for consultation. Some DOC planners are unaware of the GAC and implications. Geoff Kerr had a very productive

meeting with the DOC planners managing the Mt Cook NP and Westland NP management plan revisions. These are of some interest to hunters because of the potential for a tahr HOSI.

Geoff Kerr circulated a paper on DOC access easement hunting provisions and illustrated the issues with a disagreement over hunter access to Mt Pisa Conservation Area (this matter was introduced briefly at item 3k, but received extended discussion here). He noted that DOC has done a lot of work around protecting the public interest. However, in some locations DOC easements spell out exclusions, whereas in other locations only listed uses are permitted. There also appear to be changing interpretations for specific access easements. Geoff Kerr has had discussions with Don Hammond and Mike Tubbs (DOC) already about the Mt Pisa case. Geoff Kerr wants to avoid setting a precedent for getting involved in every dispute. However, it is necessary to get some clarity around processes for establishment and enforcement of access easements in general, so there is a reason for GAC involvement. The Council agreed that this situation is untenable and it is critical to have uniformity across all constituencies going forward. **Action item 13/10;** Geoff Kerr to write to Marie Long, DOC, to progress this matter.

- b. Ruahine Working Group: Geoff Kerr provided an update on the Ruahine Working Group – the recreational hunter survey has been finalised for some months, but has been awaiting maps from DOC. There has been a staff resignation, which affected map production, but response time has been frustrating. The DOC website is closed for amendment until mid January, so the survey cannot go live until then, but still requires pre-testing. The Ruahine Working group has been working productively, supporting each other, under Allanah Irvine’s helpful facilitation. Ben Reddix offered to seek clarification about causes of slow delivery by DOC.

15. General Business

- a. The GAC has received a document “2017 TBFree Pest Control Operations Consultation” from OSPRI and we will be coordinating councillors’ responses by 24th February 2017. The Council needs a consensus on how to respond. Councillors are to provide input **Action item 13/11**.
- b. Alec McIver reported that Hiko Productions has offered GAC space on their website for updates etc. Alec will bring a proposal to the next meeting **Action item 13/12**.
- c. Website – Board papers need to be sent out at least a week before each meeting and the agenda put up on the website. Jenny Wotten to email a copy of the meeting agenda in pdf format and courier the agenda to councillors who can’t print it out. The correct email address for the Webmaster is webadmin@nzgac.org.nz not webmaster@nzgac.org.nz. A total of 99 of the email addresses provided by the Export Trophy Levy working group were incorrect and consequently those stakeholders did not receive the consultation document. We also have continuing problems with Te Urewera and other email addresses blocking GAC emails.

- 16. **GAC Meeting Planning for 2016 & 2017** – Don Hammond proposed we meet on 20 March 2017 in Wellington. The new Council will be appointed in April and will have its first meeting 22nd and 23rd May, which is near the end of the GAC financial year.

Don Hammond thanked DOC for hosting us at their Moorhouse Ave Addington Office. The meeting closed at 4.02pm.

DOC Report – Game Animal Council Meeting

16 December 2016

Export Trophy Levy Project

- The consultation process began at noon on Tuesday 13 December and submissions will be accepted until 5 pm, 13 February 2017.
- Information on the opening of consultation has been made available via a media release from the Associate Minister's office, ads in the main daily newspapers and the Gazette, as well as on the Department's website.
- The consultation paper can be accessed via <http://www.doc.govt.nz/gac-game-trophy-levy>.
- There has been some media coverage since the opening of consultation.

Herds of Special Interest

- The Department of Conservation does not have existing management planning resources to progress the creation of a herd of special interest management plan template and accompanying advice guide. Work is currently being undertaken by the Department to scope a task assignment for this project, with the aim of implementing it as soon as possible.

Game Animal Council Appointments Process

- Nominations close today (Friday 16 December) at 5 pm. These will then go through a consideration process including the Associate Minister and the Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee prior to the Associate Minister's final decisions. Nominees should hear the outcome of their nomination in April 2017.

Game Animal Council Act 2013 Review

- Comments have been received from Departmental staff and the Game Animal Council. These are being internally reviewed by the Department and a report prepared.

Ammunition Importation Data

- The Department is in discussion with Customs around the information they hold on importation of non-.22 calibre rifles, .243, .303 and .308 calibre cartridges and other cartridges that aren't .22 rimfire, .243, .303 or .308.

Battle for our Birds Update

The 2016 Battle for our Birds programme is tasked to achieve the following;

- Deliver at least 800,000ha of predator control.

- Complete most operations within a short time frame to ensure the best result for species (July-December 2016).
- Maintain high quality standards for all operations.

Progress to date:

- The programme is more than 75% complete. Approximately 613,000 ha of aerial control has been completed and 52,842 ha of ground control is underway.
- Work is winding down for the holiday period. Only 3 aerial operations are still active; Taranaki, Makarora and the Parapara block of Kahurangi. These 3 sites can operate during the school holidays. They will either complete work by 23 December, or resume from 9 January.
- The Grebe operation has now been cancelled. November monitoring showed this site does not have enough rodents present to justify predator control.
- Monitoring results for completed jobs are beginning to come in at present so it is still early days. Results to date have been very positive.

Ground control update:

- Major ground control projects which are part of the Battle for our Birds programme include: Murchison Mountains, Southern NZ Dotterel predator control on Rakiura, Possum Control Rakiura, Haast Tokoeka trap network up-grade, and control for the protection of Orange Fronted Parakeet in Canterbury.