



NZFFA November 2020 Newsletter

Welcome to Our Newsletter

The Federation's Executive:

President: Peter Trolove (Rakaia)

Treasurer: Strato Cotsilinis (Wellington)

Secretary: Rex Gibson (Christchurch)

Committee:

Steve Gerard (Central South island), Andi Cockroft (Wellington), Larry Burke (NZ Salmon Anglers), David Haynes (Nelson), Malcolm Francis (Kapiti), Zane Mirfin (Nelson), Michael Gregg (Marlborough), Brett Bensemann (Otago), Casey Cravens (Otago).

Life Members, Tony Orman, (Marlborough), Sandy Bull (Gisborne), Ian Rogers (Auckland) and Ken Sims (Manawatu) are automatically on the committee

Co-opted: Alan Rennie (North Canterbury)

Irrigation and environment – Expertise vs Opinion

By Peter Trolove – President NZFFA.

There are several false statements made by those that wish to take water for irrigation.

Water use and storage.

1. Aquifer recharge?

Aquifer recharge has its origins in the US where the large aquifers in the Midwest have been mined to the point they have been significantly lowered. Aquifer recharge simply attempts to top up an aquifer using it as an underground storage lake for further abstraction.

There is no evidence that aquifer recharge can resolve nitrate pollution. The much touted ECan schemes are experimental at best.

2. Alpine water can be used to restore lowland FW ecosystems?

This is simply robbing Peter to pay Paul.

3. Precision irrigation will help the environment?

In reality using irrigation water more efficiently means more hectares can be irrigated creating even more nitrate pollution.

4. The minimum flows of river WCOs have meaning?

The minimum flows set by WCOs were simply the 7 year Mean Annual Low Flow. These have since been diminished by subsequent water allocation hearings.

The issue here is that there is no biological basis for this determination based on 7 year MALF.

Braided Rivers.

We are learning the hard way that the Country's braided rivers are much more complex than realised and require regular floods to prevent the braid beds from becoming embedded with silt etc. Canterbury is a classic case study.

Braided rivers function when variable flows create open shingle beaches. Tertiary and secondary braids are the most productive and "re-seed" the main braids with algae and benthic invertebrates following major floods.

5. Canterbury's braided rivers were in an approximate equilibrium with the erosion into their head waters. By "flat lining" the summer flows with irrigation storage and with low winter flows due to snow and ice holding back water flows, Canterbury's braided rivers can no longer transport sufficient gravel to the coast. ECan's river engineers attempt to manage the build-up of material in the braid bed by aerially spraying vast areas of the "protected" rivers with up to 5x label's doses of glyphosate.

This defoliation releases fine silt which smothers the lower braids. Glyphosate is toxic to fish and other aquatic life as well as destroying up to 40% of soil organisms. As trout and particularly salmon smolt rely on terrestrial insects as their main source of food in otherwise low productive main braids it is no wonder our recreational fisheries are becoming stuffed.

Irrigation's Folly.

Less water in the braids = higher water temperatures = higher metabolic rates of fish = higher feed demands (when glyphosate has wiped out much of the feed).

High water temperature is a stressor to fish and a barrier to migration.

Fish kills, especially of the larger salmon and trout, are not unknown on hot summer days in the lower Rakaia River due to periods of low flow.

Habitat modelling as used in water allocation hearings using models such as RHYHABSIM (River hydraulic habitat simulation) is a con. **Such models have never been, nor can be validated or verified.**

Where space in a river is not limiting, the model's results are meaningless. This is true for all of Canterbury's (low productive) braided rivers.

6. "Community collaboration" has a greater understanding of aquatic ecosystems than ecologists and freshwater biologists? Especially when the collaborators are primarily water users!? It is built on conflict of interest scenarios.

7. Water allocation based on the legal interpretation of property rights and other points of law simply ignores biological reality.

8. Political trade-offs can be used to maintain and restore freshwater? Yea right!!!!!!!

Peter Trolove is a scientist with degrees in aquaculture, veterinary science and a MBA. He has a long history with Canterbury's braided rivers and lives on the banks of the Rakaia in the heart of "irrigation central".

Peter on the Rakaia





A Fair and Equitable System?

An opinion piece, by Rex N. Gibson.

The National Council of Fish and Game have bumbled somewhat this year if my email in-box is anything to go by. The ministerial review of Fish and Game this year has been very timely.

ROOT CAUSES

The root causes of F & G's problems were not in one person's, or one region's, imagination. They were:

1. The undemocratic voting structure where regions with as little as 1,700 licences sold (Game bird + Angling) had the same voting power as a region

where over 17,000 were sold; that is a tenfold difference. It is the antithesis of democracy.

2. The National Council members were appointed by their regions and not elected at large. Much of their controversial work was done in public excluded sessions or sanitised minutes. This removed all accountability. They were therefore not accountable to either their regions or the licence holders at large. They were a law unto themselves.
3. There was historically significant confusion amongst some appointees about the difference between governance and management.
4. Their centralised control of funding had those regions “which got off their bums and sold licences” being heavily penalised to subsidise the insolvent regions; the same ones year after year! The result was that funding subsidised salaries rather than habitat enhancement. Such branches in business would be closed down (today!)
5. The national office had grown like topsy, absorbing increasing amounts of licence money and having no real direct accountability back to licence holders for their spending. Its structure and costs are the **Loxodonta africana**, or is it the **Elephas maximus**, in the room; when finances are considered.



6. The Fish and Game model was put together in the late 1980s. It was thus a worn out 30 year old model clearly in need of trading in, scrapping, or retirement to a museum.
7. Fish and Game currently has 12 regional councils and a National Council. They thus have 144 councillors for around 70 staff (not all full-time). Surely that is too many chiefs for that number of workers. The need for rationalisation in regional organisation is overwhelming.

Added to all this the National Council had consistently failed in its support role to regions especially in the area of effective governance (clearly shown by the need for three audits in the previous term). Some regions were, in reality, governed by the managers. In others the managers were being side-lined by their Chairmen or councillors. The Managers' Accord (or was it "cartel") has at times become a substitute council; again blurring the lines between governance and management. Inconsistent governance over past years probably contributed to the need for managers to step in to stop the ship from sinking. All of this confused leadership mess was obvious to anyone who looked carefully at the system.

It is why **the Minister of Conservation HAD NO CHOICE but to set up a Ministerial Review.**

2020's WOES

To add to their woes this year the national Council started digging an even bigger hole of controversies. Examples included:

- Their decision on legitimising illegal pheasant preserves has potentially opened up the management of all game bird species and all sports fish to commercial exploitation outside of the control of Fish and Game when it goes to a parliamentary select committee.
- Their accommodating stance on trout farming goes against every bit of scientific advice from across the globe and concedes our best bargaining chip in any attempted commercial grab of our sport.
- They have purloined the non-resident licence levy which was clearly set up to improve facilities where back-country visitors fish e.g. North Canterbury has just contributed to composting toilet in the Upper Hurunui.
- They have also “grabbed” the mallard research levy off the regions where it is needed. The logic here is as murky as some duck infested sewage ponds.
- They have set up sub-committees that criss-cross the boundaries between governance and management with gay abandon.

Managers can never be held to account if their operations are constantly directed, and even owned, by governors. This was clearly shown in their recent “Policy” document on the reserves held by regions which ignored their existing policy. It was hashed together by a informal sub-committee. Interestingly it has now, correctly, been downgraded to a “Discussion Document” as the result of concerns from the regions.

Obviously many current councillors must have read George Orwell’s “Brave New World” and believe that Big Brother knows best. The gerrymandered voting system reminds me of Orwell’s other classic *Animal Farm*. “All the animals are equal, it is just that some (the pigs) are more equal than others”

All of these issues have led to licence money being, in my opinion, squandered. We have regions where the manager’s salary is greater than the income for the region! That means that the balance of the salary, all the running costs for the region, other wages, etc all have to come from people who never ever fish or shoot in that region.



My Review Hopes

I was privileged to get two opportunities to talk with the reviewers. I was impressed with their willingness to address the issues. I am hopeful that we will get a fairer and equitable system and they will look at:

1. A funding model based on (a) the number of licence holders in that region, and (b) the usage that region's waterways get for angling and shooting (as measured by angling and hunting days ex NIWA's independent surveys). We need to see that money allocated to regions is an investment for which we expect returns.
2. A structure for National Council that is based on accountability, democracy (none of Orwell's pigs), and strict adherence to the principles of governance. I personally favour national elections for national councillors. This would remove the embedded parochialism of regional appointees.
3. A nationwide rationalisation of staffing based on angler support needs (i.e. where the angling is occurring) and inter-regional salary parities, i.e. a national salary scale and clear career pathways (this includes the national office staffing).
4. Absorbing the insolvent regions into greater entities thus reducing the current level of wastage where F & G supports twelve regional HQs when six could do the job.

A left field suggestion.

As only 0.6% of the national fishing days in any of the North Island regions are done by South Island licence holders, and only 0.9% of the total fishing days were done in the South Island by North Islanders, we should have a separate

licence for each island. There is a good argument that most of the 1.5% who cross Cook Strait to fish (other than in Taupo) can afford a second island endorsement to go to the regions they are visiting.





Rex N. Gibson

Table 3-13: Distribution of angling effort for the 2014/15 season (angler-days) by FGNZ licence region (row headings), and fishing region (column headings). Diagonal entries (bold face) denote effort recorded by anglers fishing within their licence Region; off-diagonal entries represent cross-boundary fishing. Row totals give the effort recorded by licence holders from each region; thus, Eastern licence holders fished for an estimated 130,650 angler-days. Column totals give the total effort recorded within each region; thus, an estimated 155,290 angler-days were recorded within the Eastern region.

Licence region	Fishing region												
	Northland	Auckland/ Waikato	Eastern	Taranaki	Hawkes Bay	Wellington	Nelson/ Marlborough	West Coast	North Canterbury	Central South Island	Otago	Southland	Total
Northland	870	170	280		070	20		30	10	30	70	10	1,570
Auckland/Waikato	450	19,460	16,310	940	1,370	540	150	310	270	680	570	400	41,440
Eastern	110	1,980	124,400	120	1,570	290	280	260	160	1,040	310	140	130,650
Taranaki		760	1,580	6,480	110	940	40	60	10	370	40	50	10,430
Hawkes Bay		40	4,870	30	29,860	660	10	10	170	1,160	70	20	36,900
Wellington		1,550	3,460	610	2,300	31,130	300	210	300	1,650	460	140	42,120
Nelson/Marlborough		40	170	80		670	29,380	3,510	3,180	3,450	1,260	1,260	43,020
West Coast		50	50	110	110	10	1,210	26,180	940	960	280	200	30,100
North Canterbury	50	2,090	290	320	220		2,580	13,390	141,260	48,950	8,360	530	218,030
Central South Island			730		70	140	250	3,890	21,800	181,450	5,180	670	214,180
Otago	30	80	790	120		580	800	5,940	3,440	43,310	143,750	8,860	207,680
Southland			180	40		20	240	370	2,740	11,390	20,510	98,300	133,780
Overseas	60	650	2,190	170	1,710	1,000	3,860	2,900	1,750	5,090	5,210	12,010	36,600

Total	1,570	26,690	155,290	9,010	37,390	35,990	39,090	57,080	176,030	299,520	186,070	122,660	1,146,490
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Solving Fish and Game's financial befuddlement.

Is the answer already in the table?

The attached table comes from NIWA's last National Angling Survey (2016). It takes only a minute to read.

The rows tell you where the anglers from the region fished and for how many days.

E.g. in Northland they fished 870 days in their home region, 170 days in Auckland/Waikato, 280 days of fishing in Eastern, and so on. The last column tells us that, in total, how many days fishing occur in total from licence holders from that region. Northland licence holders thus fished 1,570 days across all regions.

The highlighted figures running across the page show how many days anglers spend in their own region e.g. West Coasters fished 26,180 days in their own region.



The last column tells us who fish the most. North Canterbury anglers (218,030 days) narrowly squeeze out CSI (214,180) and Otago anglers (207,680) for the title of top anglers.

Percentages of the national total are:

Northland	0.13%	Auckland/Waikato	3.61%
Eastern	11.40%	Taranaki	0.91%
Hawkes Bay	3.22%	Wellington	3.67%
Nelson/Marlborough	3.75%	West Coast	2.63%

Nth Canty	19.02%	Central Sth Is	18.68%
Otago	18.11%	Southland	11.67%

North Island total = 22.94%, South Island total = 73.87%, Overseas anglers 3.19%

So anybody can see that, outside of the Taupo (DoC) region three quarters of all angling occurs in the South Island. Despite this the amount of funding to manage the resource for anglers is:

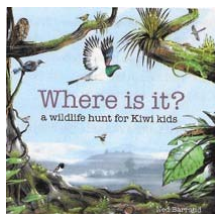
North island 37%, South Island 38% and National Office 25%.

I won't rave on too long. The problem is obvious. Fish and Game is **not** looking after three quarters of anglers and angling, while it slips backhanders to expensive staff, etc, in regions that probably have no right to exist as corporate entities; certainly not as fully-fledged "branches".

This NIWA National Angler Survey table is revised every seven years. It is the ideal basis for determining the use of licence fees. It is factual data; an ideal antidote to the parochial horse trading system of the existing model with its gerrymandered voting system and subjective decisions on "need"

Or is this solution too sensible for those who thrive in a system that is built around a competition between big egos?

Rex N. Gibson



Great Wildlife learning Book for Kids

Book Review: “Where Is it? – a Wildlife Hunt for Kiwi Kids” by Ned Barraud, published by Pottton and Burton, price \$19.99
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A political comment by Rupert Pye A curate’s egg is something that is partly good and partly bad. The saying can be traced back to a cartoon published in “Punch”...

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I Went in For Trout Fishing

Tony Orman came across this delightful article in a 1939 “NZ Fishing and Shooting Gazette” magazine. He has abridged it and hopefully he says without detracting from its quality and subtle humour. Many a true...

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