

Taupō Fishery Advisory Committee Meeting.

DOC Office, Turangi, Thursday 19 March 2026, 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: Matt Noel – charts and tables
 - 6c – Communications update: James Barnett - written report
 - 6d – Technical update: Mark Venman – written report
 - 6e – Compliance update: Steve Doughty – written report
7. **Agenda Items:**
 - 7a – Presentation Gerald Wilson and associates.
 - 7b - Lake Otamangakau management - (DOC).
 - 7c – Regulations review and Anglers Notice - (DOC).
 - 7d – Willow control update - (DOC).
 - 7e – Tauranga-Taupō flood protection works - (Julian).
8. **Verbal reports.**

TALTAC (Chair TFAC)	Julian Proctor
Tongariro River Advocates	Richard Kemp
Waitahanui Anglers...	Shirley Fraser
NZPFG	Mike Fransham
Motuoapa Boating...	Bob Crompton
TNTCS	Louise Stewart
NZPFG	Deb Mair
National Angling...	Peter Bragg
Fish & Game NZ	Debbie Oakley (National Council) Matt Osborne (Eastern Region)
Taupō Launchmans...	Vacant

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

As the summer limped to an end, such as it was, I did manage to get out a few times for a poke around with a rod, either on the big river or out on Lake Taupo, and I think my fishing very much mirrored most of what we saw being reflected in the angler survey results. All in all a pretty mixed bag I would say, the dry fly fishing on the river never really hit any great highs, and the big lake continued to deliver a wide range of fish size and quality. While the suboptimal summer weather probably contributed in some part to my mixed river fishing, naturally I can't level any blame at myself and my rusty skills, the lake trend very much fell in line with the expectations we had flagged going into summer, and again demonstrates the value of the acoustic monitoring regime we have in place. One thing I really did enjoy seeing was the large increase of angling pressure at Te Rae point at Kuratau, following the removal of the landmark post and associated angling restrictions. It has quickly become a local hotspot, with shore based anglers, who appear to be primarily children as well as kayakers and other boaties enjoying some very productive fishing.

Licence sales have held up pretty well, the sales report shows much the same position as pre-summer and the encouraging factor is that sales didn't appear to be significantly impacted by the very average weather, so we are tracking towards year end in a relatively sound position financially. The April acoustic monitoring is just around the corner, and we are all looking to it with interest to see if the recent downturn in productivity has started to show signs of bouncing back, which would be encouraging with respect to the upcoming winter fishery. Whilst my personal sample size was modest, evidence seems to support reports of the younger maiden fish being in generally very good condition, so perhaps at least they have enjoyed a productive summer.

The summer weather is something of a talking point regarding lake Otamangakau as well, with the unseasonally low temperatures and high rainfall keeping the lake temperatures low right through the summer, including during the February closure period, and this has certainly been something of a topic for conversation, as is evident by the additional agenda item for this meeting. To that end the fishery management group and Michel Dedual met with Gerald Wilson and his team this week and had a very productive session discussing ideas and options for future management. I expect the committee will enjoy the chance to meet them and discuss their concerns as we did, as I think there is a deal of common ground to work on together.

It has been a busy period for the team since the last meeting, the compliance figures alone from over the summer point to that, as well as some real pressure points deriving from aging infrastructure at the Trout Centre, most concerningly the primary water intake pipe, which is showing its age and will need significant levels of ongoing investment. The bridge replacement project is progressing well, with the Turangi Town swing bridge replacement due to break ground next month, and expected to be completed before the winter angling peak arrives.

RECOMMENDATION: That the information be received and noted.

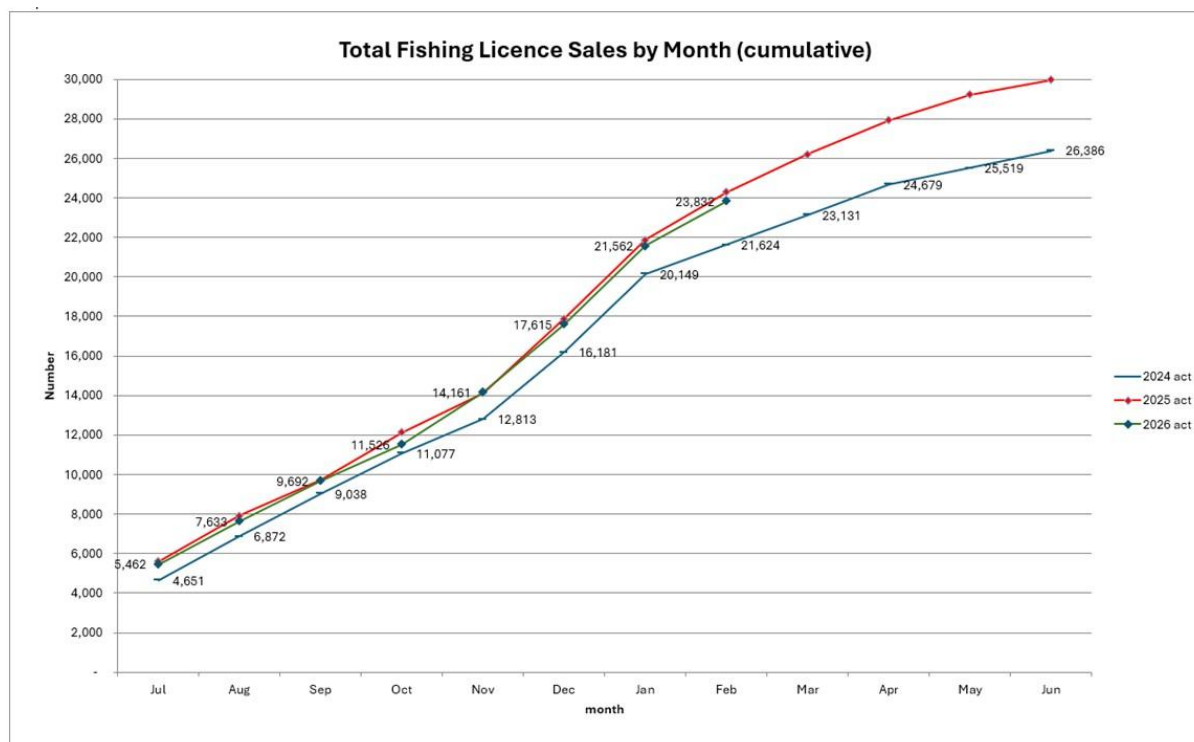
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Another key project underway is the final work to rehabilitate the Waipa Trap, with gabion armouring of the true right of the trap site the last piece of work needing completing, which will hopefully ensure another 30 years of the collection of the data which is vital to our ongoing management.

Item: 6b – Licence sales data
Matt Noel – CNI Accountant.

1. Taupō fishing licence sales – 2025/26 season to Feb 2026



Fishing licence sales for the 2025/26 Taupō fishing season are tracking slightly behind the same time last year, with a 6% dip in revenue.

Further information including cumulative revenue and licence types can be found attached - Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION: That the information be received and noted.

Item: 6c – Media and communications.
James Barnett

The new Taupō fishing licence sales system has now migrated to ‘Business As Usual’ status, with local delivery responsibility passed from the former Project Team to Site Support staff. The licence sales platform is continuing to benefit from technical improvements as we further refine systems in the first year of operation.

We are delivering on our commitment to conduct a public survey about the proposed introduction of limited spin fishing on a small specific section of the Tauranga-Taupo River. This is in response to angler feedback. The survey has been completed, reviewed, and a Status Report provided to Ministers. The survey launched on Friday 13 March and will run for approximately two weeks, concluding Sunday 29 March. We look forward to reviewing the results in April.

Newsletter stories and Facebook posts over summer kept anglers informed. Before Christmas we emphasised the importance of harvesting within the Lake Taupō catchment, with an emphasis on why this is important. Technical information helped anglers better understand the fishery and the monitoring work we conduct. We covered practical items that could impact anglers, such as bridge replacement plans, flood management work and forestry operations.

Compliance also featured in our communications, with a national story about increased offending over summer, and local stories highlighting lights on patrol vessels for easier identification and risks with scented softbaits.

Biosecurity was also referenced in both newsletters, highlighting the importance of Check, Clean, Dry to protect the Taupō Fishing District from invasive species like gold clam. The collaborative nature of the response was underlined in a story about our support for an investigation conducted by Waikato Regional Council and Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board into a potential gold clam sighting.

We continued our support for the men’s mental health initiative, Te Mātāpuna o te Mauri (the men’s fly-fishing group) with a further allocation of discounted licences. We are happy to support this excellent programme, that has the potential to significantly improve mental wellbeing.

Preparation is underway for our annual photo competition. The comp is an excellent way to highlight the upcoming Taupō fishing season, while also allowing anglers the opportunity to share great photographs. As previous years, there will be seven winners to reflect the different licence categories. One will be selected as the overall winner and will grace the front of the plastic season licences.

RECOMMENDATION: That the information be received and noted.

Item: 6d – Operations and Technical update
Mark Venman

This technical update focuses on our Lake Taupō angler surveys.

Between October and mid-January, staff have undertaken 159 angler surveys on Lake Taupo. This short report summarises the summer data collected so far and compares it with data from the same period since summer 2017/18. The estimated catch rate for this summer was 1.14 fish per hour (1 legal sized trout every 52 minutes) which is down slightly on last summer but generally up in comparison to recent summers and indicates good numbers of trout being present in the lake.

Jigging continues to be the most popular method of fishing Lake Taupo with 49.1% which is the highest percentage out of the last 5 summers but on par with summers 2017/18 to 2019/20. Deep trolling with lead lines (25.8%), shallow trolling (10.7%) and downriggers (8.2%) largely accounted for the rest and were on par with what was observed last summer

Technical report, including details and graphs - Appendix 2

Item: 6e – Compliance update
Steve Doughty

Compliance continues to be a key tool in managing and protecting the Taupō fishery, a resource locals and visitors continue to engage with. Delivering compliance rests with a team of 7 warranted officers in the fishery team, as well as 3 others working in a support role. In February we completed a 3-day training programme with CERT Systems covering situational safety, tactical communications and interview skills.

The team has been busy over the summer dealing with a sharp increase in breaches of Taupō fishery regulations. The spike is a mix of increased patrols, higher detection rates through more experience in the team and a noticeable level of people either ignoring the regulations or hoping not to get caught.

In December to February 2023/2024, we dealt with 21 offences. That number halved for the same period in 24/25 and in 25/26 spiked to over 40 offences. To put this into perspective, we over doubled our patrol hours on Lake Taupō, December – February 25/26 compared to the previous year and saw a 400% increase in offences.

Detailed compliance report - Appendix 3.

Agenda: 7 Committee Agenda Items.

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Item: 7a and 7b – Lake Otamangakau management (DOC).

Discuss management of this iconic trophy fishery.

Item: 7c – Regulations review and Anglers Notice (DOC).

Update on latest progress with this important initiative.

Item: 7d – Standing item – Willow control update (DOC).

Discussion point.

Item: 7e – Tauranga-Taupō flood prevention work (Julian).

Discussion point.

Agenda: 8 Verbal Reports

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Tongariro River Advocates	Richard Kemp
Waitahanui Anglers...	Shirley Fraser
NZPFG	Mike Fransham
Motuoapa Boating...	Bob Crompton
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Taupō Launchmans...	Vacant

RECOMMENDATION: That the information be received and noted.

Agenda item: 9 – Next Meeting

To be agreed.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Licence sales report.
- Appendix 2 – Technical report, Lake Taupō angler surveys.
- Appendix 3 – Compliance report.

RECOMMENDATION: That the information be received and noted.