

Terms of Reference Taupo Fishery Review



February 2012

New Zealand Government



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



Terms of Reference - Taupō Fishery Review

Objective:

To ensure that management of the Taupō fishery delivers a world class, sustainable trout fishery which contributes optimally to the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the region.

The Taupō fishery is managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). To achieve the objective the Department wants to ensure that:

- Taupō is a sustainable world class fishery and destination for anglers,
- The Taupō fishery is an integral and integrated part of Destination Great Lake Taupō,
- DOC's management of the fishery contributes to the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of the region,
- DOC is well integrated and aligned with its key partner in the fishery, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, as well as other fish and game and fisheries managers (including the Lake Rotoaira Trust), the angling community, district and regional councils and energy companies,
- As the Taupō fishery manager, DOC has the confidence of its key partner, stakeholders and the support of the wider community.

Context and Background to Review:

The 1926 Māori Land Amendment and Māori Land Claims Adjustment Act established a relationship between the Crown and Ngāti Tūwharetoa to manage the Lake Taupō Sports Fishery. The Crown, initially through Internal Affairs, Wildlife Service and then the Department of Conservation (since 1987), has exercised its part in this relationship through the management of the fishery.

The Taupō Fishery includes Lake Taupō and its tributary rivers including the Waikato River to Huka Falls; Lakes Moawhango and Otamangakau and the Waikato River between the control gates bridge and Huka Falls.

The sports fishery, in particular Lake Taupō and the Tongariro River, is internationally acclaimed. The Taupō fishery receives the highest level of angling use of any in the country and provides approximately 40% of New Zealand's total freshwater sports fishing.

The Taupō Sports Fishery Management Plan is due for a formal review in 2012. It's timely, therefore, to discuss the present management regime and identify opportunities and options for future improvement.

The Conservator identifies this as a particularly important project especially in context of the current world-wide economic downturn and a recent decline in the health of the fishery. The latter has drawn concern from some in the angling community as well as other stakeholders, including the Taupō District Council.

Additionally, there have been several recent structural changes within DOC culminating in a merger between the Tongariro Taupō and Wanganui conservancies. The newly created Tongariro Whanganui Taranaki (TWT) conservancy includes a new area office joining the Fishery and Turangi Taupo areas into one, known as the Taupō-nui-a-Tia area.

It's intended that this review, together with information from a 2011 public consultation process and subsequent discussion document, will support the development of a new ten year management plan, and give confidence to all stakeholders and the wider public that the fishery is in good hands. As well, the review outcomes will give managers direction and guidance, and provide the Conservator with confidence that management structures and processes are both effective and efficient.



Key issues and opportunities for exploration

In order to achieve its overall objective, the Department has identified seven critical areas for the Review Team to examine. These are:

1. Effective and transparent governance

- Governance and advisory processes:
 - How well are they working?
 - How well do they meet the key partner and stakeholder's expectation?
- The Taupō Fishery Advisory Committee model:
 - How effective is it?
 - How responsive is it to licence holders?
 - What are the improvement opportunities?
- The interface with the Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board (TWMTB) and Conservation Board
 - How does this work?
 - What improvements are needed?

2. Management direction and systems

- Vision and goals
 - How well are they currently defined and articulated?
 - How well aligned are they with:
 - The Department's strategic direction?
 - Other fishery agencies' strategic thinking?
 - The Tūwharetoa Iwi Environmental Plan?
 - Taupō District Council's community outcomes?
 - The aspirations and expectations of licence holders/anglers?
- How effective is the Sports Fishery Management Plan as an instrument to set the long term direction and management philosophies?
- How does the Sports Fishery Management Plan interface with existing conservation management strategies?
- Financial and internal systems and processes
 - How well integrated and transparent are existing financial systems?
 - How are resources allocated?
 - How are outputs aligned with outcomes?
- Is the fishery being managed from the best location?
- What are the capability gaps?





Tauranga Ika Fisheries

3. Honouring the agreement between the Crown and Ngāti Tūwharetoa, relating to the Taupō fishery

- How well does DOC understand and acknowledge Ngāti Tūwharetoa aspirations and expectations?
 - What are the opportunities?
- How does Ngāti Tūwharetoa wish to engage and discuss issues such as:
 - Revenue
 - Mana
 - Governance
 - Cultural wellbeing
 - Licensing?
- How well do existing systems meet expectations and needs?
- What is the general understanding of the Ngāti Tūwharetoa/Crown relationship?
 - How can this be better communicated?

4. Productive and positive stakeholder relationships

- How well do we understand and acknowledge wider community and other stakeholder expectations and aspirations?
- What is the current state of relationships with licence holders and other stakeholders?
- What are the opportunities to grow, improve and/or integrate with them?
For example with:
 - Fish and Game Councils at both a national and regional level
 - Destination Great Lake Taupō
 - Taupō District Council
 - Taupō Fishery Advisory Committee
- What is the role of National Trout Centre?
- How effective are the current methods of communicating with, and reporting to, licence holders and other stakeholders and what future opportunities can be identified?





5. Examine the current state of the fishery:

- What are the opportunities to improve it?
- What are the current interventions and what are the possibilities?
- What role does the National Trout Hatchery have in terms of research and intervention aimed at improving the fishery.
- How well is the threat of a didymo incursion and/or other pest species understood?
- How can fishing pressure be relieved?
- How are science needs currently determined?
 - How are they applied and what are the future opportunities?
 - What are the issues regarding genetic engineering?
- The Taupō fishery is cyclical:
 - How well is this understood?
 - How can this be better communicated?
- What role and input does the Taupō fishery have in the broader catchment and lake management?
 - Where are future opportunities?
- What is the role of the Taupō fishery in freshwater advocacy?
 - What are the future opportunities?
- Fishery access:
 - How is the fishery accessed?
 - Who uses and accesses the fishery? (e.g. families, individuals, commercial operators)
 - What are the issues and how are they currently managed?
 - What are future opportunities?

6. Optimising the economic contribution of the Taupō fishery to the region

- Identify the current contribution of the Taupō fishery to the regional economy.
 - How can this be increased e.g. by destination marketing, a focus on the overall visitor experience, new licensing packages, improving the angling opportunities etc.
- What are the current revenue trends and how can they be increased?



Te Waipuna
Water

A photograph of a person fishing in a lake. The person is wearing a green jacket and an orange cap, and is holding a fishing rod. The lake is calm, and there are trees in the background under a blue sky with some clouds.

7. Maximising the Taupō fishery's contribution to the social wellbeing of the community

- Growing the market:
 - What is the current focus on keeping current licence holders 'in the game'?
 - What are the opportunities?
 - How are these communicated?
 - What is the current approach to education?
 - What are the opportunities?
 - What is the role of NTC?

NB: The above list is not conclusive and as part of the review process it's anticipated that other issues and opportunities will be identified.

Under each area the aim of the Review Team is to summarise key issues and opportunities as well as to highlight the gap between the current state and desired outcomes and to provide these recommendations to the Conservator.

Scope

The review process **includes:**

- An examination of the current state of the Taupō fishery and its management.
- Identifying opportunities for improvement and recommendations to the Review Sponsor

The review process **excludes:**

- Structural changes (e.g. the fishery will continue to be part of the Taupō-nui-a-Tia area office)
- Changes to the current legislative framework
- Changes to the Crown's management role under the 1926 Agreement with Ngāti Tūwharetoa.

Review Sponsor

Damian Coutts, Conservator Tongariro/Taupō/Whanganui Conservator, Ngāti Tūwharetoa Conservation Liaison Committee

Expected Measurable Outcomes

A report that clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses of the current management model and approach together with opportunities for future improvement.

This report must be of sufficient quality to be used as direction and guidance for the formal statutory review process (Taupō Sports Fishery Management Plan) and be used by managers to drive improvement. It will address the two key areas identified in the context section by:

- Researching and providing recommendations on the structures, processes and systems employed in DOC's fishery management to ensure confidence in its efficiency and effectiveness.
- Examining, and providing recommendations on the long term direction and management philosophy.



Methodology

A Review Team established; consisting of representation from the Department of Conservation, Tūwharetōa Māori Trust Board, Taupō Fishery Advisory Committee, and Fish and Game (regional)¹. An external consultant² will be engaged to support the review process.

- **Critical stakeholders and staff** engaged through surveys, individual interviews and workshops to include: the National Trout Centre, Destination Great Lake Taupō, Fish and Game Councils, anglers and potential anglers, Ngāti Tūwharetōa, Lake Rotoaira Trust, Taupō Fishery Advisory Committee, Taupō District Council, Department of Internal Affairs (Harbourmaster function), regional councils and energy companies.
 - Survey/questionnaire to licence holders based on the Terms of Reference
 - Specific workshops held with Ngāti Tūwharetōa, local businesses and Destination Great Lake Taupō, Fish and Game and Taupō District Council staff, and representatives of the angling community (including members of the Taupō Fishery Advisory Committee)
 - Individual interviews and a workshop with Department of Conservation staff
- **Steering Group** (quality assurance) established³ : consisting of representation from the Department of Conservation, Tūwharetōa Māori Trust Board, Fish and Game (national), and the Taupō District Council
 - Peer review draft report
 - Consider progress reports and provide ongoing input as required

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- ¹ Role to lead workshops and interviews, consider survey responses, oversee the drafting of the report, and sign-off on recommendations. Expected time commitment for members up to 40 hours over a 6-8 week period. Membership - Alan Simmons (Taupō Fishery Advisory Committee), Rob Pitkethley (Manager, Eastern Region Fish and Game), Tūwharetōa, Mark Venman and Bill Fleury DOC
- ² Role will be to pull together survey questions, arrange and facilitate workshops, record outcomes of interviews, workshops and surveys and draft report. Expected time commitment 80-100 hours and up to \$15,000
- ³ Role to consider progress reports, review draft report. Expected time commitment 8-10 hours over the period of the review. Mark Davies DOC representative.



Communication

Develop a communication plan for both internal and external audiences.

Suggestions are:

External:

Create an interactive webpage which includes key documents and survey questions. Post outcomes of interviews and workshops to this page with opportunities for comment and feedback

Internal:

All DOC staff with an interest in the outcome of the review will have an opportunity to give their views (either through workshop, individual interview or written submission)





Reporting and Management

The Review Team will provide a monthly progress report to the Conservator and the Ngāti Tūwharetoa Conservation Liaison Committee.

Related exercises and documents

- Destination Great Lake Taupō planning exercise
- Review of National Trout Centre
- Taupō Sports Fishery Management Plan review
- 2011 discussion document (as part of the Taupō Sports Fishery Management Plan Review) and the consultation process undertaken

Timeline

The Review Team will be established by 1 March 2012 and will begin work immediately.

The consultation process will take place between March and June 2012, with a final report provided to the Conservator and the Tūwharetoa Trust Board Chief Executive by 30 September 2012.

