

To: Kaipara District Council

From: Northland Fish and Game Council.

Matter: Stopping the release of Trout into Lakes Taharoa and Waikare

The Northland Fish and Game Council are objecting to the decision of the Taharoa Domain Governance Committee to not allow the release of trout into Lake Taharoa and Lake Waikare.

The reasons being:

- There is no reason to stop the trout releases based on current science.
- No reason/s has been provided why the releases are stopped when the KDC staff report recommends the continuation of releases. Staff report 28 May 2020.
- Fish and Game and the KDC along with the Taharoa Domain Governance Committee have an agreement prepared by the KDC legal adviser Brookfield's to allow the continuation for the release of trout dated 5 May 2017.

Paragraph 3 of that document reads

The Committee will defer cessation of Trout stocking in Lakes Waikare and/or Taharoa from 2018 in light of the new information received from NIWA in its April 2017 report, and provided it is satisfied with the progress in respect of 1 and 2 above. Any ultimate decision on the continued stocking of trout will likely be dependent on the results of the research monitoring programme.

- Fish and Game agreed to defer any legal action against the KDC until a research monitoring programme, which should be a balanced and objective scientific assessment advises how best to balance the species in the lake and to ensure the long term survival of the DLG.
- Fish and Game with resourcing from NorthTec are the only ones who are currently actively undertaking any monitoring research programmes. Fish and Game and NorthTec have expended more staff time, finances and field equipment resources to this monitoring programme than any other members of the group. The fisheries working group consists of individuals representing KDC, DOC, NRC, Te Kūihi and Te Roroa, NorthTec and F&G.
- The TDGC is regularly updated on the progress of the research by the Fisheries Working Group through KDC staff reports. These reports appear to have been ignored by the committee members in making their decision.
- NIWA has indicated that any meaningful research into the DLG would take at least 5-10 years if the programme they have modelled is followed. This research programme needs funding but none of the other parties have contributed any finances to date to engage an independent researcher. Estimated cost is a minimum of \$100,000 per annum.
- The Department of Conservation has a legal obligation under the Conservation Act section 6(ab) to preserve so far as is practicable all indigenous freshwater fisheries, and protect recreational freshwater fisheries and freshwater fish habitats.
- The TDGC has completely reneged on its part and disregarded the agreement.

- NIWA, s Dr David Rowe's experiments (1993-1999) on the effect of removing trout from Lake Waikare showed that the gambusia (mosquito fish) was attacking the adult DLG once the trout were removed.
- DLG have completely disappeared from Lake Kai Iwi following the cessation of trout stocking in 2001, having been eliminated by gambusia.
- DLG and trout have coexisted in the lakes for over 55 years and there are still healthy populations of DLG today.
- Lake Ototoa on South Kaipara Head has a significantly reduced to near extinct population of DLG following the termination of trout stocking due to the illegal introduction and displacement by perch and gambusia.
- The Taharoa Domain is a Recreation Reserve under the (S17) Reserves Act and must provide for "sporting" and other activities, and exotic and indigenous flora and fauna are to be managed.
- A management plan cannot be inconsistent with the powers of the KDC with respect to the reserve. A management plan cannot prevent trout introductions.

Ramifications for the Kaipara District, if trout were no longer present in these lakes:-

1. If the release does not proceed Fish and Game are left with no other option but to invoice the THGC for the cost of the trout for the 2020 releases.
2. The judicial review is ready to be lodged. In **New Zealand** there is no fixed statutory **time limit** on the issue of **judicial review proceedings**.
3. The science on the lifecycle and ecology of DWG is incomplete; therefore F&G must assume that the KDC is prepared to settle the matter in court. The will be cost to your rate payers.
4. The decisions of the KDC will almost certainly deliver to extinction the very fish (DLG) the KDC supposedly desires to save.
5. Economic impact from a lack of overseas and out of region anglers on accommodation providers, shops, cafes, food outlets, boat servicing businesses, service stations, etc.
6. The loss of income from NZ and foreign holiday makers who fish and use the camping grounds at the lakes.