

## MINUTES OF THE 11<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE NSW KANGAROO MANAGEMENT ADVISORY PANEL

ZOO FRIENDS BUILDING WESTERN PLAINS ZOO – 13<sup>th</sup> March 2008

**Present:** Joshua Gilroy - Chair (DECC), Brent Bryce (DECC), Arthur Snook (DECC), Noni McCarthy (DECC), Nicole Payne (DECC), David O'Shannessy (RSPCA NSW), Marie Russell (RLBP), Sandy Bright (PAWD), Michael Cavanagh (KIAA), Michael Mulligan (AGMPA), Dick MacFarlane (Dubbo Field Naturalists & Conservation Society), Dr Tony English (Aust Veterinary Assoc) (arrived late), Ray Scott (NSW Farmers Association), Nathan Cutter (DPI)

**Apologies:** Patrick Medway, Ben Mannix, Greg Markwick

### 1. Formalities

#### *Adoption of Agenda*

- DECC to give brief update on research involvement – otherwise agenda as circulated.

#### *Ratification of Minutes # 10*

- Revision of section of minutes from last meeting. Acceptance of revised minutes.

**Moved:** Mike Mulligan **Seconded:** Marie Russell

#### *Review of Actions from Meeting # 10*

Action 1: Arthur Snook to discuss issues raised by trappers with NSW Food Authority.

- *Arthur spoke with Glen Locke of NSW Food Authority shortly after last meeting. Nicole and Arthur to meet with NSW Food Authority 19 March.*

Action 2: AGMPA/KIAA to consult their members about a single weight limit.

- *Advice provided to DECC supporting two weight limit.*

Action 3: DECC to decide minimum weight/s for 2008 after advice from industry.

- *DECC decided on 14/15 kg minimum weights and advised trappers with renewal information. Licence conditions updated for 2008.*

Action 4: DECC to request further advice re trapper licence moratorium.

- *Further advice has been sought, and advice has not changed on this matter.*

Action 5: Summary of SE NSW meetings

- *Summaries of meeting held in SENSW on 21 November 2007 distributed to members at meeting. Chairman thanked wholesalers for their support of these meetings.*

Action 6: DECC to supply members with cost and expenditure report.

- *Reports for last complete financial year provided to meeting.*
- *This is a summarised version of total costs. Note that travel is a large portion of non-salary costs.*

The panel requested more explanation of employee related expenses. DECC indicated that it is difficult to quantify exactly due to part time employment in some offices. At present there are 13.2 full time equivalents spread across 11 offices.

## **2. 2007 Annual Report**

- Draft copies of the 2007 Annual Report were circulated to members.
- Report contains the breakdown of the harvest for 2007 by zone and species, special quota, sex bias, average weights, non-commercial cull, compliance, other factors of influence, and updates on research supported by DECC.

### *Total harvest*

- The overall 2007 harvest was 86% of approved quota - lower than last year but still significantly higher than the long-term average. The harvest was disrupted towards the end of the year by heavy and widespread rainfall over the last six weeks or so.

### *Average weights*

- Average weights of all species and sexes are consistent with long term averages.
- Charts make no allowance for different sample sizes – large variation in female wallaroo weights is an example of the effect of small numbers on statistical analysis.

### *Sex Bias*

- 60-65% of the overall harvest was male, which is consistent with the long-term average.
- Compliance officers have started recording sex of carcasses during chiller inspections.
- During November last year 819 carcasses were checked, of which 64% were male.
- So far this year 2,022 carcasses have been checked, of which 70% were male. These checks have been done across all harvest zones except SENSW, at 30 different sites.

### *Non-commercial take*

- Even when the commercial quota has been fully allocated, non-commercial take is still very small (about 5% of quota on average).

- SE NSW zone still has a relatively high non-commercial take. This is probably because it is still a new zone, however non-commercial culling has fallen by over 60% since the commercial option became available.

#### *Compliance Activities*

- In 2007, 100 PIN's were issued, 97 to Trappers and 3 to Fauna Dealers.
- Two matters were taken to court, in both cases the offences were proved and significant fines were handed down by the Court.
- Two cases of alleged species substitution in the Inverell area are expected to go to Court mid-year.
- DECC cancelled 2 trapper's licences for multiple breaches of licence conditions, and 10 occupier's licences due to false information supplied on applications.
- Landholders making their first application for tags are now being asked to supply a copy of RLPB rates notice so DECC can verify size and ownership of holdings, for Landholder protection as well as DECC.

*Action 1: Landholder Representatives on Panel to communicate to their members the importance of filling out the forms accurately, including the number of kangaroo tags requested. Need to make sure the landholder actually signs the form.*

#### *Research:*

Brush-tailed Rock Wallabies - ongoing. Not directly related to commercial harvest, but some suggestion that high numbers of eastern grey kangaroos in Warrumbungles NP are adversely impacting on Rock Wallabies.

Comparison of field metabolic rate of kangaroos and sheep – ongoing. No data published as yet, trial is continuing – Dr Adam Munn, University of NSW.

Effect of kangaroo harvest on biodiversity and on agricultural production – Dr Steve McLeod, DPI/University of Sydney

Carcase dehydration in chillers – completed. Study supported by VACIK who provided chiller and some of the carcasses. Results published in Australian Zoology Journal. Study found that carcasses dressed for petfood processing do not lose weight due to dehydration whilst hanging in chiller for the usual range of timeframes. This is especially relevant to the minimum weight licence condition. May need to do same research with human consumption dressed carcasses, however anecdotal evidence suggests result would be the same. Industry reps commented that carcasses may lose weight in chiller if not well bled in the paddock.

*Action 2: All members to send any requests for edits to Annual Report by 26<sup>th</sup> March.*

- Although not part of the 2007 Annual Report, DECC gave an outline of research about to commence into the seasonality of breeding patterns across the commercial harvest zone.
- The current restrictions on minimum weights by processors may impact our ability to collect data, and processors were asked to consider assisting the research project by lifting restrictions for particular shooters who are participating in the work.

*Action 3: DECC to prepare a formal request to Processors regarding financial assistance for trappers involved in the seasonality project. Need to specify potential numbers and timeframe.*

### **3: Minimum Weights**

- DECC compliance staff commented on current practice of trappers retaining tails on smaller animals to increase the carcase weight.
- Industry reps explained that this may be because a processor has a market for tails at that particular time.
- Clarified that DECC does not differentiate between carcasses processed for petfood or human consumption, only that the carcass must meet the minimum weight applicable to that style of dressing as per the licence conditions. A "pet food" animal with the tail on must weigh 15 kilograms.
- Industry reps explained briefly that there are not markets for small skins so larger carcasses are sought by industry.
- Industry reps were adamant that commercial decisions generally should not be open for discussion in this forum, and pointed out that a change in the commercial situation could change the policy overnight.
- The Chair clarified that DECC has observed individual companies are paying one price per kilogram for smaller carcasses, and a higher price per kilogram for larger carcasses.
- DECC commented that there is some confusion among trappers as to which weight limit applies. DECC advises that the licence condition is legally enforceable, and that any issues relating to higher weight limits imposed by processors are not of concern to DECC.

*Action 4: DECC to include clarification of legal vs market weights and minimum weights with tails on with next trapper newsletter.*

### **5. Tag allocation and Take (discussed out of order)**

- Tag allocations current to yesterday morning (11/03) indicate 26% of quota allocated to date.
- In ballot zones these tags are current to end April or end May due to staggered release.
- In non-ballot zones expiry dates will vary because issue of tags was spread out more.
- Harvest to the end of January 2008 very slow, with only 3% of quota taken at this point.
- Last year 56,000 for same timeframe. Lot of empty chillers.

- Expect harvest rate to increase when crops start to emerge - maybe as early as late April/early May.
- 2008 looks like best year for winter cropping for several years, appropriate that there will be earlier release of final 60% of quota.
- RLPB raised the concern of shooters that due to a combination of season and pricing quite a few will be left with unused tags.
- There was some discussion amongst the meeting that whilst weather falls under the conditions for Exceptional Circumstances, pricing issues do not.
- PAWD pointed out that all agricultural industries are subject to price variations and trappers should accommodate these risks in their business model.
- Trappers are free to make application for extensions or refunds up to the date the occupier's licences expire.
- Industry rep requested that the Minutes reflect his objection to discussion of commercial decisions in this forum.
- The Chair noted that there was to be no decision regarding this matter at this time, this was just to be a discussion. A decision would be made closer to the end of the licence period. This is a policy question, not a legal question, however there is the option of licence extensions/'blanket' extensions, and a precedent to allow some discretion in these situations if deemed necessary.

#### **4. Trapper Licence Moratorium (discussed out of order)**

- Number of trappers normally increases throughout the year.
- DECC has not been approving new applications except from those people who had already started their accreditation process prior to the decision.
- Trappers last licensed prior to 2004 are deemed to be new applicants.
- Total number of trappers over past years relatively consistent except for this year - but the situation is about the same as this time last year.
- There is normally approx. 12% turnover each year.
- Suspect that some trappers have renewed licences where they may not have in the past, reducing exit rate.

#### *Issues for consideration (from Discussion)*

1. Industry rep: Result of request for further legal advice?

Chair: No changes to previous advice.

2. Industry rep: Aside from shooters, did any panel member support this decision?

- Wildlife Preservation Society is supportive.
- Trappers in the Coonabarabran/Narrabri/Tablelands Zones strongly support the moratorium, Trappers in Western areas are supportive, but less affected by the issue.
- AVA and DPI have no strong view either way, and do not have all information they might need to form a view.
- PAWD, RLPB and AGMPA do not support the moratorium.

- A submission was also received from the Western Lands Advisory Council, supporting the issue of new trapper's licences only in those zones where the quota is not fully allocated.

3. DECC: Licences are based on calendar year, and most licences commence in January. Any decision made after the start of the year therefore cannot be implemented until next year.

*Action 5: Trapper number table to be sent to all members.*

4. Chair:

- High prices and strong demand have led to increase in shooter numbers in some zones.
- Anger in certain areas about the large number of licensed trappers.
- There are a number of current processors and trappers who have never seen a wet year and are not familiar with the disruption it causes to supply.
- Trapper Accreditation course - financial viability of service provider in keeping the accreditation available becomes a problem with fewer new entrants.

5. RLPB:

- If the moratorium continues, what would happen with new zone proposal?
- DECC: existing shooters are already trying to tee up areas in proposed new zone.
- DECC: New zone surrounded by areas with ballot problems, could alleviate problems by providing these trappers with additional harvest areas.
- DECC: Trappers have been raising the issue of too many trappers for at least 5 yrs – prior to recent “boom”.

6. Industry: What level of importance is placed on KMAP position?

- Chair: Presenting views to DECC and sharing with each other. All submissions will be available for all parties to review. Ultimately, decision will be made by the Minister considering all submissions.
- Discussion highlights that trappers are a group with views that differ significantly from others.
- Department will have a discussion with the Deputy Director-General to talk through the issues and then a decision will be made.
- DECC will need to continue to consider the views of trappers.
- One possible outcome will be to examine issues around licensing policy, irrespective of the short term decision regarding the moratorium.
- RLPB noted that they always try to bring to the meeting issues raised with them by trappers.

## **7: Trapper Association Progress (discussed out of order)**

- Update from Project Co-ordinator
- Should be registered legal entity by start of new financial year.
- 200-300 trappers actively support the formation of an organization.
- Membership will be voluntary.
- There have been 22 meetings across the state so far.
- It looks like the proposed structure will be to have individual zone delegates with an Executive steering committee. This steering committee will then take issues to the relevant forums.
- The organization must form under its own interest, but may be able to apply for funding to get operation happening.

Chair: Ideal model would be with 700-800 trappers, should be able to self fund. Expenses for travel will be the most difficult to cover.

RLPB: Has there been any discussions of minimum number required for the organization to function properly? There is the potential for a very small minority to be seen as representing the whole industry.

Chair: when the organization folded last time, was less than 20 members. Nearly 10 years since then.

Industry: Industry is supportive of the concept, need to have majority representation to give representative views.

Chair: Will probably need some 3<sup>rd</sup> party funding to keep the organization functioning in the medium to long term.

## **6. New Zone Proposal**

- Panel provided with information relevant to the new zone not included in the proposal, ie map of public lands and statistics on areas of different tenures.
- Two parts to the decision: first, whether a survey should be conducted to establish population estimates, and only then whether or not the new zone should proceed considering the outcomes of the survey.
- The purpose of the discussions at this meeting is to decide if KMAP supports the expenditure required to undertake a survey of the proposed area.
- The survey could be done in September, with results available at the October meeting.
- The expected cost for the helicopter survey  
\$40,000 helicopter hire (could be more)  
\$20,000 in consultant for design and analysis  
\$ 4,000 staff cost  
\$64,000
- Licensing staff estimated at 0.5 full time position, equivalent to approx \$40,000 per year.
- The annualised projected cost to run this zone will be approx. \$60-65,000 per year, not including compliance.

- Other points :
  - 16 % of proposed area is State Forest or National Park.
  - SENSW zone is the most similar of existing zones (22% protected - mainly Kosziusko National Park).
  - Too big to run as one management zone if it goes ahead.
  - Most of current non-commercial take is in Mudgee-Merriwa and Central Tablelands areas.
  - One alternative is to add parts of new area onto existing zones. Would be good to match RLBP boundaries if these are stable.
  - RLPBs are currently under review.
  - Industry: If this is to happen, there will then be a small area in NSW, west of the mountains without a commercial zone. Has it been investigated to get data/include this area now? It would be more efficient than a second investigation soon after the proposed current one.
  - DECC does not initiate these proposals, however we are expecting some preliminary information from Bombala in next few weeks.
  - Non-commercial culling very low in this area, unlikely to be commercially viable based on current information.
  - If DECC receives a modified proposal with additions, it would be considered if in near future.
  - Cost savings from having a single investigation would not be significant, but would be convenient.
  - However, kangaroo populations were negligible when surveyed in the past.
  - Logistics of setting up in densely populated areas will be difficult.
  - Does industry have the capacity to absorb extra quota?
  - If new supply chains are created that are potentially more convenient- will this impact level of service in current areas?
  - Industry: No impact on current zones. Russia has the capacity to double consumption virtually overnight.
- DECISION TO BE MADE: Do we undertake survey design and commission? Would individuals like to go back to their organizations, or provide advice today?
- All members felt they were able to provide advice today.
- All members recommended that the survey be commissioned.
- Trappers who have spoken to DECC staff indicated that the survey is appropriate but not if it came at any cost to trappers.
- Chair: This recommendation will be taken to DECC. If approved, results of survey will be presented at next meeting.

*Action 6: Discuss administrative matters at next meeting, when possible RLPB boundary realignments will be known.*

## **Other Business**

### ***Fee Review***

- Cash reserves from previous years have been exhausted.



- Fees are currently the same as at 1Jan 2000 despite a 25 % CPI increase since then.
- Over the next 6 months, DECC will be reviewing the fee structure.
- Similar to the previous fee review in 1999, DECC's admin and management processes can be considered, specifically how the program can be delivered more efficiently, and how costs to industry may be reduced.
- Before 31 July 2008:
  - every member organization invited to put forward submissions on above matters.
  - DECC extends offer to have KMP staff attend their meetings, address State Council, Board meetings *etc.*
  - DECC will arrange meetings with trappers in regional areas and fauna dealers as a group.
- Need to get back to advisory panel to talk through issues as raised.
- Changes to fee structure and management will need to be approved by the Minister.

*Action 7: KMAP member organizations to contact DECC to arrange any face to face meetings*

- There was a discussion of local client service model, with 12 licensing offices around the state, and that a centralized model of client services would be more efficient, but with consequences for clients/licensees. This will be considered in the review.

If quota increases, will this eliminate the need for a price increase?

Chair: As industry rarely hits the quota, it's not likely. Current business model works on about 900,000 harvest for each year. On a harvest of 800,000, the aim is for the Kangaroo Management Program to make ends meet.

DECC staff invited to attend the RLPB State council meeting in Orange in May.

### ***Administrative Appeals Tribunal***

Update from DECC: Hearings scheduled for 31 March and 1 and 2 April.

### ***Compliance***

- Discussed previously in relation to 2007 Annual Report.
- KMP staff have been working with interstate departments and Police.
- 53 PINs ready to issue at present for trappers.
- The next round of compliance activity is about to start with chillers.

### ***Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos***

- Draft on public exhibition from late December to 6 March.
- To date there have been a couple of dozen submissions.
- In the near future, the working group will get together to analyse submission and amend draft as necessary.

- Will then submit a final version to the Environment Ministers from all states for approval.
- Main differences in the new document relate to its layout, correction of some ballistics errors and the new code deals specifically with young at foot.
- There are still issues regarding methods of dealing with young at foot, but no other feasible methods were suggested before the draft was exhibited.
- Document should be finalized and approved in next few months (review taken 6 years in total, but a very significant, key document that deals with animal welfare considerations)

### ***BARG/FATE Update***

- All parties have agreed on the general principles for this experiment.
- Specific issues that have needed to be addressed are the conditions needing to be on a General Licence to encompass all the conditions on Professional Trapper, Occupier Trapper and Occupier Licences.
- FATE group is currently in discussions with landholders and trappers to determine the final level of support.
- Once our legal team have signed off on the General Licence document, FATE will take this out to landholders who will then put together a final application.
- Quota will be determined based on the final area of interested landholders.
- Once quota has been finalised, tags, licences and relevant data sheets will be issued and trial will commence.
- At this stage, assuming no major hiccups, anticipated start date will be approximately mid-April.

***Next Meeting:*** All industry reps not available 16 -26 October.

*Action 8: All Members please send availability for the period 29<sup>th</sup> Sept – 10<sup>th</sup> Oct.*

Meeting closed: 1.35pm

### ***Summary of Actions***

***Action 1:*** Landholder Representatives to communicate to their members the importance of completing application forms accurately.

***Action 2:*** All members to send any requests for edits to Annual Report by 26<sup>th</sup> March.

**Action 3:** DECC to prepare a formal request to Processors regarding financial assistance for trappers involved in the seasonality project. Need to specify potential numbers and timeframe.

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