

Working collaboratively with industry



The Ministry of Fisheries is leading collaborative reviews to help improve the economic performance of New Zealand's fisheries. The following outlines three areas of review that are currently underway.

RESEARCH SERVICES STRATEGY

The integrity of scientific research is a key underpinning for evidence-based management decisions for New Zealand's fisheries and is critical for maintaining and demonstrating the credibility of New Zealand fisheries management.

The collaborative review aims to:

- look at how the Ministry decides its research priorities and projects, and how these link to objective-based Fisheries Plans
- review opportunities for improved provision of research, and what standards need to be in place around this
- look at other ways we could make our fisheries management and fisheries research more efficient and cost-effective, including reviewing the Ministry's research tendering and contract management processes.

The review aims to complete analysis on initial improvements to the 2010/11 research planning cycle by end of August 2009, and to complete analysis on system reform at a later date.

OBSERVER SERVICES STRATEGY

Observers on commercial fishing vessels provide an independent source of high quality scientific and other information from commercial fishing operations. The integrity of information from observers is a key element of management decisions for New Zealand's fisheries, particularly as an input to scientific stock assessments and for monitoring the environmental impact of fishing activities.

The collaborative review aims to:

- develop clear specifications around observer coverage
- identify ways of improving efficiency and effectiveness of delivering this coverage
- suggest how this might be implemented.

If changes are recommended, these will be considered by the Chief Executive and be subject to consultation. Any changes that may eventuate will be from mid-2010 at the earliest.

DISCARDING AT SEA STRATEGY

The Quota Management System provides a sound basis for fisheries management in New Zealand, but both MFish and the seafood industry recognise that there is scope for improvement. One specific area of interest is in the management of discarding of fish at sea.

MFish and the seafood industry are reviewing the current framework for managing unwanted catch, to ensure a clearer and more practical approach to managing this issue – in a way that maintains the integrity of New Zealand's fisheries management.

There are many reasons why some catch is returned to the sea. In some cases the law says that it must be returned to the sea (for example in the case of species with minimum size limits). In other cases, the practical difficulties involved in avoiding or landing unwanted catch can provide incentives for returning it to the sea.

MFish and the industry are carrying out a collaborative review that aims to:

- develop a better understanding of the different issues involved in managing unwanted catch across different species and fisheries; and
- look at how we might manage these issues more effectively and efficiently.

Recommendations will go to MFish's Chief Executive by 30 June 2010.

