

National Meeting of Regional Recreational Fishing Forums

Nov 20-21 Mercure Hotel, Wellington

Summary of Proceedings

Meeting Host: Leigh Mitchell, Inshore Fisheries Manager - Central East

Meeting Organiser: Andy Warmbrunn, Fisheries Analyst – Central East Inshore Team

In attendance:

Forum Representatives

John Waugh, Greg Goodall, John Holdsworth, Paul Batten, Edward Beetham, Collin Murray, Kevin Moriati, Jim O'Brian, Anthony Olsen, Richard Baker, Sheryl Hart, Alan Key, Jim Crossland

Observer

Geoff Rowling

Ministry of Fisheries (MFish) Presenters

Day One: Leigh Mitchell, Jonathan Peacey, Paul Creswell, Kim Drummond, Phil Kirk, Billy Brough.

Day Two: Andrew Warmbrunn, Peter Todd, Ralph Townsend, Mark Edwards, Neville Buckley, Geoff Rowling, Billy Brough, Leigh Mitchell.

Day One

Leigh Mitchell welcomed delegates and facilitated a round of introductions.

Session One: Opening of Meeting

Jonathan Peacey formally opened the meeting with a talk on objective-based management. He discussed how it was important for MFish to be clear on:

- what it wanted to achieve from the fishery
- what MFish needed to know
- where MFish want to the fishery and how we need to take purposeful action to get there

He discussed how MFish is currently

- Improving access to information and creating new information systems
- Upgrading its websites
- Has installed video conferencing throughout its offices

Jonathan also discussed the roles of the regional fishing forums and noted that they were an important source of information and advice for regional fisheries operations teams throughout the country. Finally, Jonathan looked at Fish Plans. He looked at the various grouping of fish plans (ie inshore finfish, freshwater, shellfish/Seaweed) and showed the delegates the new fish plan web pages.

Session Two: Progress of Recreational Forums: Successes and Opportunities

Paul Creswell conducted this session on the progress of the forums noting individual forum feedback indicated that, in general, the forums are running well, and are considered important for both forum members and MFish to discuss regional and national fisheries issues. Paul provided some data on the extremely wide range of fishing organisations, clubs and groups

that are involved with the forum. He noted that there were approximately links to 46 regional fishing associations/clubs and links to 8 national fishing bodies.

Paul reflected on the initial objectives of the forums and then asked delegates to discuss amongst themselves how their individual forums are going in relation to the objectives.

Delegates reported that the forums are progressing well and providing a good avenue for engagement with the recreational sector. All delegates noted, in particular, the objectives of 'build positive relationships', 'education', and 'identifying local issues' were being achieved. There was a lot of discussion around the objective of 'improve effective consultation'. Forum members noted that the forums enabled them to access more information and discuss local issues with MFish and that this was a welcome improvement. Most members noted that the forums also provided a good pathway for communication between recreational fishers through their respective clubs to MFish via the forums and vice-versa. Some members commented that this was not the case in their forums. Paul noted that consultation by MFish is done under Section 12 and the forums role is not to take the place of formal consultation but rather to enhance the recreational sectors ability to participate in the consultation process. They also felt the national meeting was a good addition as it gave them the chance to share their views, ideas and experience amongst the various forums.

Objectives identified by some delegates as not being achieved included 'enhance ability to participate' and 'inclusive of Maori'. Delegates noted that more time and resources was need to enable members to participate effectively on the forum and competing time by iwi representatives to be involved on a wide range of forums including the recreational forums.

The discussion identified some administrative areas where delegates thought the forums could be improved. These were

- Set agendas for meetings at least 2 weeks before they are held.
- Ensure that there are not too many agenda items and that there is sufficient time for all items to be discussed.
- Place local issues first in the agenda so that these are always discussed and not held over to future meetings if time runs out.
- The length of meetings was discussed and it was discovered that there was a large variation of the times meetings run for (between 2.5 – 7 hours). Forums should discuss this issue and decide whether the length and day/time of the meetings are appropriate for their own forum.
- The amount of meetings per year was also brought up and members were informed that the initial plan provided for 5 meetings per year.

Paul reported that these ideas for improving operation of the forums would be distributed to Forum Facilitators and that the Forum Facilitators would arrange agenda time to discuss these ideas further with each forum at a future meeting.

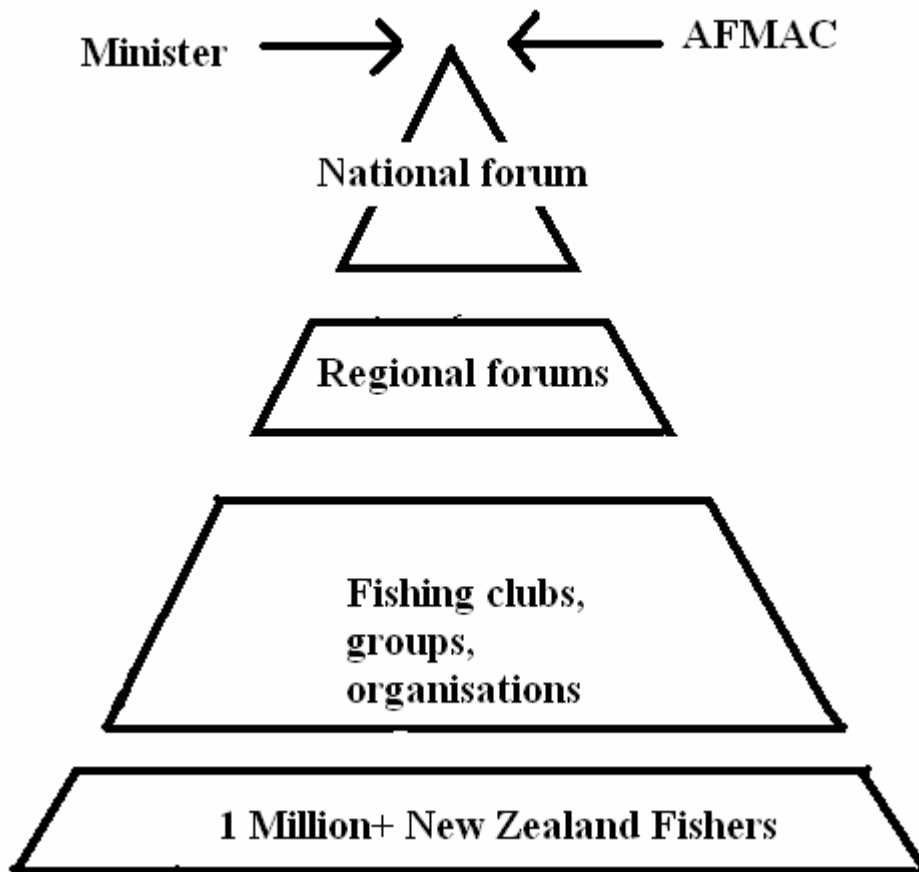
Session Three: Engagement

Kim Drummond gave a presentation on the past, present and future of recreational sector engagement. He presented a brief outline of how MFish engaged with the amateur sector in the past and discussed how AFMAC, Regional Recreational Fishing Forums and FPAGs (Fisheries Plan Advisory Groups) all have a role to play in the current engagement process.

Kim conveyed to the delegates the Ministers decision regarding the setting up of an Amateur Fishing Trust. The Trust is intended to provide a vehicle for the amateur sector to work towards a mandated and representative structure. He noted that establishment of the Trust is subject to funding approval by Cabinet, that it is not in itself a representative organisation nor a replacement for current involvement in fisheries management. However, the Trust was expected to be able to provide professional assistance to existing and future organisations

during the period of its existence. Delegates noted their support for the Trust but commented that such support was subject to the trust being set up appropriately and being sufficiently funded. Delegates were encouraged to discuss the benefits of establishing an Amateur Fishing Trust with their respective forums, and any fishing organisation they belonged to.

Edward Beetham presented on the way that he saw the regional recreational forums could be built upon to provide national recreational representation. He drew a chart that showed a pyramid structure (shown below) that outlined



The group discussed Edward's plan with some delegates noting that the idea may provide for wider representation of recreational viewpoints and issues than there has been in the past. The democratic aspects and appeal of Edward's plan were also discussed. The idea that the approach could be used to establish the Amateur Trust was put forward but discussion identified a need for the Trust to be completely independent. Delegates noted that it would be best for them to take back information from both Kim's and Edward's presentations to their respective forums and discuss how their members feel the trust should be set up and organised. Many delegates felt the approach might provide a good short-term step to improving recreational engagement while the Trust completed its process however.

Session Four: Shared Fisheries

Phil Kirk gave an update on the Shared Fisheries proposal. He noted the Minister's decisions regarding the support for a joint fisheries sector (tri-partied) stakeholder group, the setting up of an amateur fishing trust, charter boat reporting and recreational research.

Phil answered questions concerning the amateur fishing trust, which included its independence, its rules and how it may be set up, the processes to appoint trustees, and how it will report. He also asked delegates to take this information and discuss it with their forums.

Session Five: Charter Boats

Kim Drummond led a discussion on charter boats and gave a presentation on the Minister's decision regarding activity and catch reporting for charter vessels. Kim noted that charter boats provide the amateur sector with another means to go fishing, and the catch was part of the amateur allowance.

Kim discussed the need to consider carefully how to develop a reporting framework, including how such data could be used to improve fisheries management decisions. He noted that the Marine Transport Association offered its support to developing a framework during the consultation round.

Kim noted that there were two different types of reporting of interest, that of: 1) generic activity reporting and 2) specific catch reporting. He raised the issue of the use of the data for management noting that charter boat catch reporting was unlikely to assist stock assessment for most species, with two specific fisheries - hāpuka and kingfish – being the exceptions. Kim also compared Australian charter boat numbers with the size and growth of the New Zealand charter fleet, and described some of the reporting approaches used in Australia.

Delegates discussed whether charter operations should report, what should be reported, and who should report it. Some delegates commented on the amount of fish taken by charter vessels, especially hāpuka, and that this was a problem. Other delegates did note that, although there are many charter operators who set their catch limits below those of the Ministry of Fisheries and try to promote responsible fishing, there are operators who promote themselves by guaranteeing bag limits. Further discussion also took place on the issue of what should be reported, with some members noting that all catch should be reported, not just certain species, as this would add to the information available on total recreational catch. Most delegates considered reporting should occur but some concerns were raised about the cost (ie who is paying). The need for reporting to be compulsory was reinforced. The number of charter boat operators reported by Kim was challenged, with delegates noting many vessels registered to carry passengers actually carried environmental tourists rather than fishers.

Kim outlined that consultation on the proposal will be commencing early next year and the forums will be able to be involved.

Session Six: Topical Issues in Brief

Billy Brough facilitated discussion between delegates on topical issues. The session was provided to enable delegates to share information and generally discuss ways to progress a number of issues with each other. The issues covered included, telson clipping, safety boat men, disabled permits, deemed values and boat ramp surveys. Although the key discussion points for each issue were given to the delegate who raised the issue to take back and discuss further with their respective forums, a short summation of each session is included below:

Telson clipping of rock lobster by recreational fishers was raised by Kevin Moratti of the North Island South West forum. Delegates had differing views on the merits of recreational fishers' telson clipping rock lobsters. A key conclusion of the discussion was the need for increased compliance effort to reduce illegal harvest, regardless of whether telson clipping was introduced for rock lobster stocks.

The entitlement of safety boatmen to a bag limit was raised by Alan Key from the Southern forum. After some discussion, many of the forum members agreed a definition of 'safety boatmen' was needed and where harvesting required safety boatmen for health and safety reasons, the harvesters should be able to take a bag limit for the safety boatmen. Some noted that this could raise sustainability concerns in some fisheries and could mean bag limit

decreases. Leigh Mitchell confirmed that allowing bag limits for safety boatmen was considered for other stocks like kina and rock lobster, but the Minister believed doing so for these fisheries could create sustainability risks.

The withdrawal of Disabled Permits by MFish was raised by Sheryl Hart. Paul Creswell confirmed disabled permitting was reluctantly withdrawn by MFish as it was being seriously abused. The discussion centred on identifying methods to prevent people from abusing the disabled permitting system, if it were to be re-introduced. Delegates largely agreed that people with disabilities should not be precluded from deriving some benefit from the fisheries resource.

Colin Murray of the North Island South East forum raised the issue of commercial deeming of fish. Delegates felt overfishing of the TACC shouldn't be allowed and therefore stronger monitoring and management of deeming was needed. Colin also reported on a series of boat ramp surveys undertaken in Hawke's Bay. Delegates were concerned at the low levels of catch reported by Colin. The merits of boat ramp surveying to obtain accurate recreational data was discussed. Leigh confirmed recreational sector surveying would be discussed in more depth during Ralph Townsend's and Peter Todd's session on Day Two.

Day Two

Session One: Summary of Day One

Andy Warmbrunn provided a summary of the main points raised over the sessions of the previous day and outcomes achieved.

Session Two: Recreational Research

Peter Todd provided an outline of how the MFish research planning process works, how it is funded, and what has been and is the priority for recreational research. He discussed the limitations of previous recreational harvest estimates and highlighted recent research methods such as aerial over-flights, ramp surveys, the use of webcams, and various combinations of these and other research methods.

Peter then answered questions from delegates concerning the issues raised including the timeframes used in stock assessments (especially concerning SNA8), the reliability of past, present and future data collected through research, and the use of data obtained outside of the official research structure (ie by clubs/individuals). Other discussions focussed around the aerial surveys (the non-counting of moving vessels) and the limitations of such surveys.

Some delegates noted that there should be an avenue for research done by clubs to be used, or methodology provided to compile and standardise such data. Peter Todd was keen to talk further with delegates who raised these topics and did so later. Peter also encouraged the forums to take a part in the recreational research process.

Ralph Townsend then gave a talk on socio-economic research on recreational fishing. He commented on different research methods being used in other countries, the values recreational fishers place on fish size, first fish, and the economic contribution of the recreational fishing sector. He discussed with delegates their issues which included what the value impact was of the recreational sector being spatially removed from the fishery, the economic value of recreational fishing (regarding businesses/boat builders and retailers/fishing retails, etc) and the impact of deemed values in regard to recreational value (and the subsequent loss of fish to the recreational sector). Delegates also commented on the need for fish stocks to be managed above Bmsy, noting that although it may be good for fish harvest

to be managed at Bmsy, this does not reflect the recreations sector preference for, and value placed on, larger fish.

The session concluded with delegates being asked to contribute their ideas to three topics.

1) What are some possible approaches that might be used to determine (estimate) how many New Zealanders fish recreationally in a year?

Responses included:

- Using the census
- Using a sport and recreation survey
- Coast guard radio – log of calls – boating only
- Independent vs. clubs
- Registration of fisheries
- Industry - fishing shops - ratios

2) How to get better estimates of shore based recreational fishing activities?

Responses included:

- Car beach survey on the west coast
- Pier surveys in Wellington
- Data from compliance
- Number of dive tanks being filled (catch per tank effort)
- Road surveys (if only one road)
- Aerial surveys
- Fishing competitions – how many fish caught
- Random
- Certainty of data
- Local v. Regional

3) What issues and fisheries are the highest priorities for social economic research?

Responses included

- Effects of being spatially removed from fishing areas (positive/negative)
- Fish for food (sustenance)
- Recreational only areas – recreational ‘mataitai’
- Health issues (fish as protein)
- Spatial depletion – examples of Kaipara Harbour/SNA8 Auckland
- Competing methods – kayaks – kites - kontikis

Session Three: Developing a Vision for the Recreational Sector

Mark Edwards discussed the Ministry’s strategic direction and statement of intent processes. He asked the forum about their future vision for fisheries which included the following questions:

- What are the most important long term goals for fisheries management?
- How delegates would like to see New Zealand’s fisheries viewed both nationally and internationally?
- How they would like to see the fisheries managed in the future?

Responses from session participants to these questions were varied. Three common themes in the discussion centred round good husbandry by all sectors, the management of fisheries resources to enable recreational fishers to catch fish in the long term and greater recreational sector participation in local fisheries management issues.

A brief bullet point summary of some of the ideas that the group came up with are listed on the following page.

- Spatial management – need to be able to contribute to inshore management
- Problem – dislodged from the resource
- Answer – local management
 - An integrated group making contribution so MFish have one group to deal with
- A mandate for local groups cooperative, integrated
- Key shared fish stocks about Bmsy
- Stable achievable catches
- Base of the ‘fish pyramid’ protected
- Recreational only species kahawai, broad bill, king fish
- Husbandry within the fishery protected encouraged
- Water quality improved – catchment management infrastructure
- Improved take up of new knowledge
- More knowledge of near shore
- Knowledge, acceptance of customary rights – all participants
- Acceptance of all rights
- Taking into account ‘new perspectives’ from immigrant populations into fishing
- Resolving biosecurity issues
- An overarching body – resolved Oceans management issues – integration of statute
- Value is a reasonable starting point
- Having a clear ‘right’ – a well founded common law right - Clarity of relationship between rights.
- New Zealand to be at or above ‘best practice’ standards
- Robust international agreements with ‘teeth’
- Relevance for international agreements
- World class fisheries management system
- Responsible – sustainability
- Know what is ‘good behaviour’
- Responsible fishing - all fishers recognise value and respect for the resource
- Access to ‘reasonable daily bag’
- Tourists – not entitled to our bag limits
- Good baseline data to look back on to review progress

Session Four: Promoting Responsible Recreational Fishing

Neville Buckley presented this session and worked with the delegates to assess three major issues. Firstly, the group discussed what responsible recreational fishing actually entailed. Secondly, they discussed ways that have been used in the past to promote responsible fishing and other avenues that may be available in the future.

Neville then turned the group's focus onto whose responsibility it is to promote responsible fishing. He completed the session with a request for "one-liners" that might be able to be used in promoting recreational fishing.

A brief bullet point summary of some of the ideas that the group came up with are listed below.

What is responsible Recreational Fishing?

- Correct handling of fish for return to sea
- Retail of illegal gear – expectations are that if you purchase it should be legal
- Kaitiakitanga – whole marine environment
- Focus on the fish that can be used ie Food-fish or baitfish, best practice
- Hook size and type
- Tag and Bag (accumulate catch)

How do we promote it?

- Getting the message out there (Costs involved – ie Post)
- Improvements in measuring caught fish etc instructions)
- Demonstrations/Education for measuring
- Education trailer / Handbook / Value of
- Better reasoning for regulations (why they are made)
- Promoting prosecution / Coast watch
- Education in schools (VITAL) – DoC approach
- Talk to fishing shows / boat shows
- Guidelines/accreditation/codes of practice for fishing comps and charter boats
- Expulsion of members from clubs – breach of responsible fishing
- Clubs could promote members to HFO network
- Use of internet (Cheap medium – fishing clubs web sites, links to MFish website)

Who should promote it?

- MFish – lead the way – requires buy in from resource users
- Shared responsibility
- Clubs about comps
- Buy in through good management – don't want to undermine rebuilt stock
- Threat of compliance – fear of being caught/perception/peer pressure

One Liners

- Use your share with care
- There is enough in the ocean for people's needs, not people's greeds
- More fish in the water
- Cast a line, don't spin a line
- Cast a line so you don't have to spin a line

Session Five – Preparing for Marine Protected Areas

Geoff Rowling gave a brief talk on ways to prepare for Marine Protected Area processes. He noted that there has been a lot of debate about the classification system and protection standard, and that the process was a collaboration between MFish and DoC. Geoff related his experiences with the West Coast Marine Protected Area Forum and noted that it included representatives from: Iwi; Quota Owners; Local Commercial Fisheries; Amateur fishers;

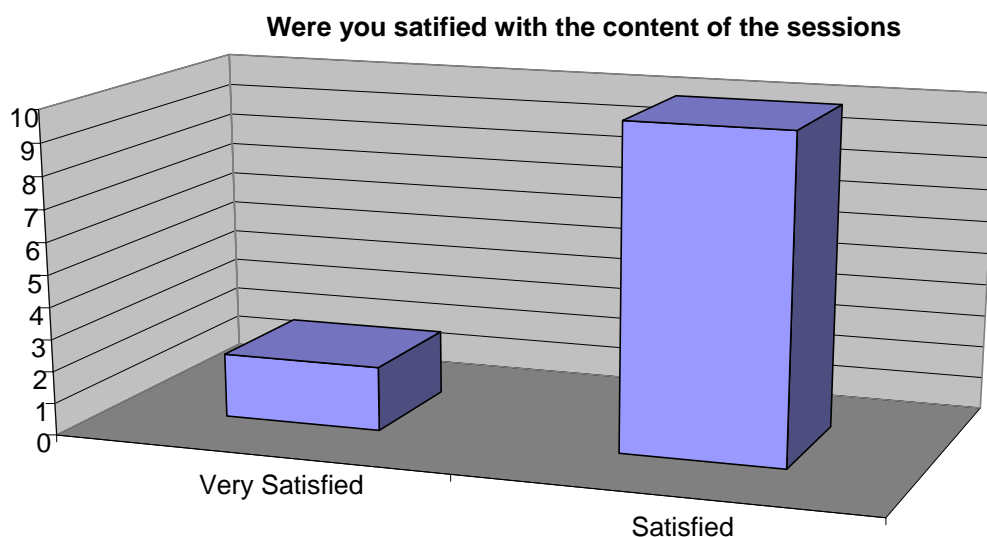
Dive club; Environmental groups; Tourism bodies; and the West Coast Regional Council. He added that it involved elements of the terrestrial, intertidal and marine environments and was an information driven process. Geoff noted that Marine Protected Area (MPA) processes would be “coming to a region near you” soon and that they should prepare for them. He informed the group that it was important to leave the understandable baggage they held about marine reserve decision making processes behind and get involved because this new process as it provided the opportunity to influence where MPAs were put rather than just respond to set applications. He noted the need to start pulling together the information they had on areas most and least important to them as a sector. Geoff commented that they themselves held a lot of information within the heads of individuals or within their clubs but that other sources of information may also be useful. He noted the West Coast MPA Forum was successful in obtaining research through the MFish research process in order to gain additional recreational fishing information on the west coast.

Delegates had questions about the MPA Policy, in particular about the way in which the community group would choose MPAs and what level of fishing access would be provided in MPAs. Leigh Mitchell answered these questions, noting the recent consultation documents on the MPA Habitat Classification System and MPA Protection Standard sought to give definition to what must be protected and what level of activity could be allowed within MPAs. She also noted that the MPA Policy directed choice of site towards the MPA options that represented the “least cost” on users. Leigh recommended that delegates encourage further and more detailed discussion of this topic within their individual forums.

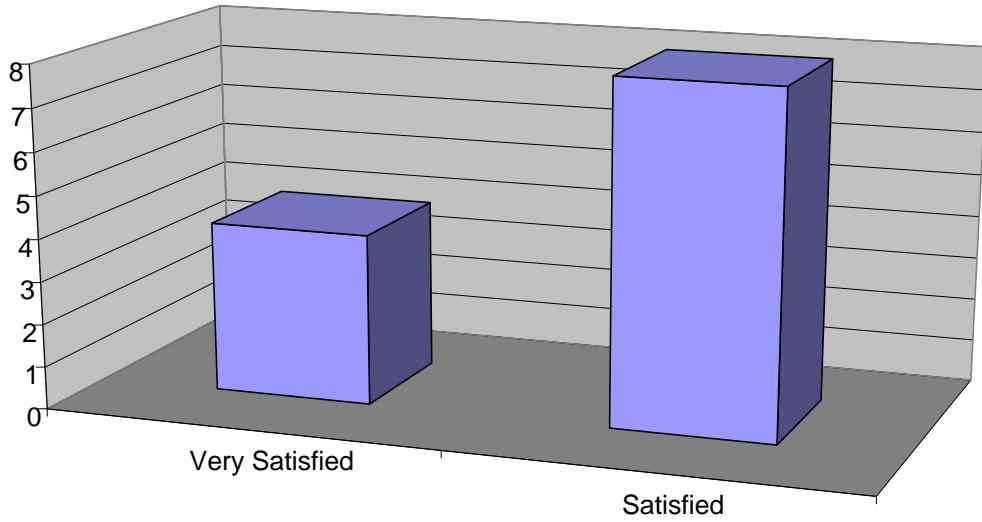
Geoff wrapped up the session noting that forums and clubs should register their interest in being involved in MPA processes to ensure they get to sit round the table.

Session Six

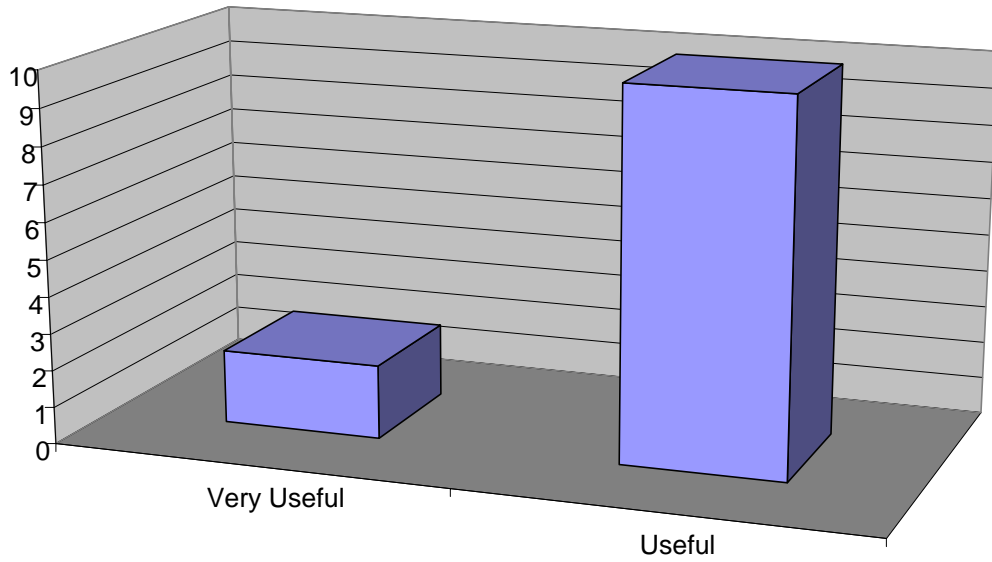
Billy Brough conducted a meeting review and feedback session. Delegates were given a number of marbles and asked to place the marbles in cups to help in evaluating the national meeting. The results are below.



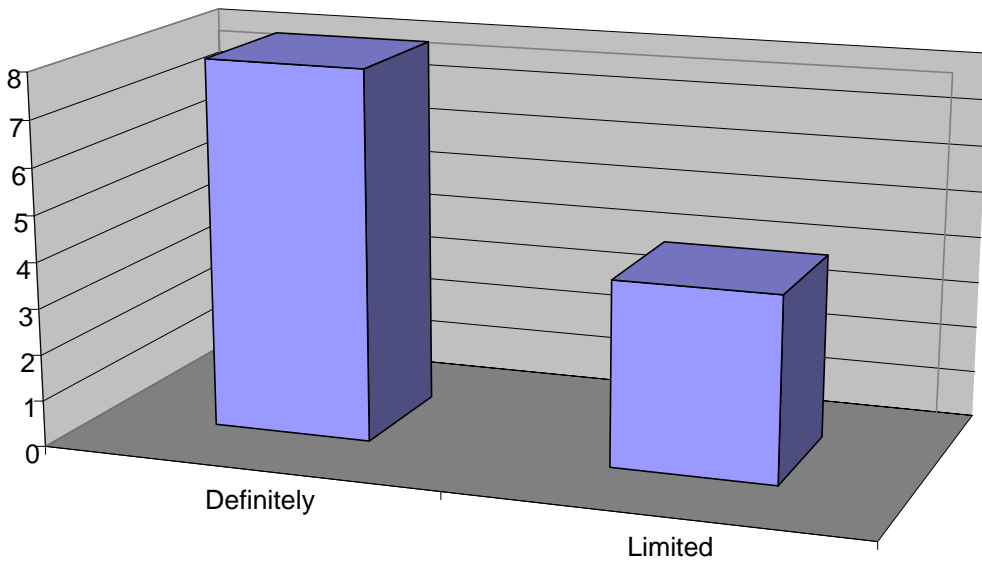
Were you satisfied with how each of the sessions was presented



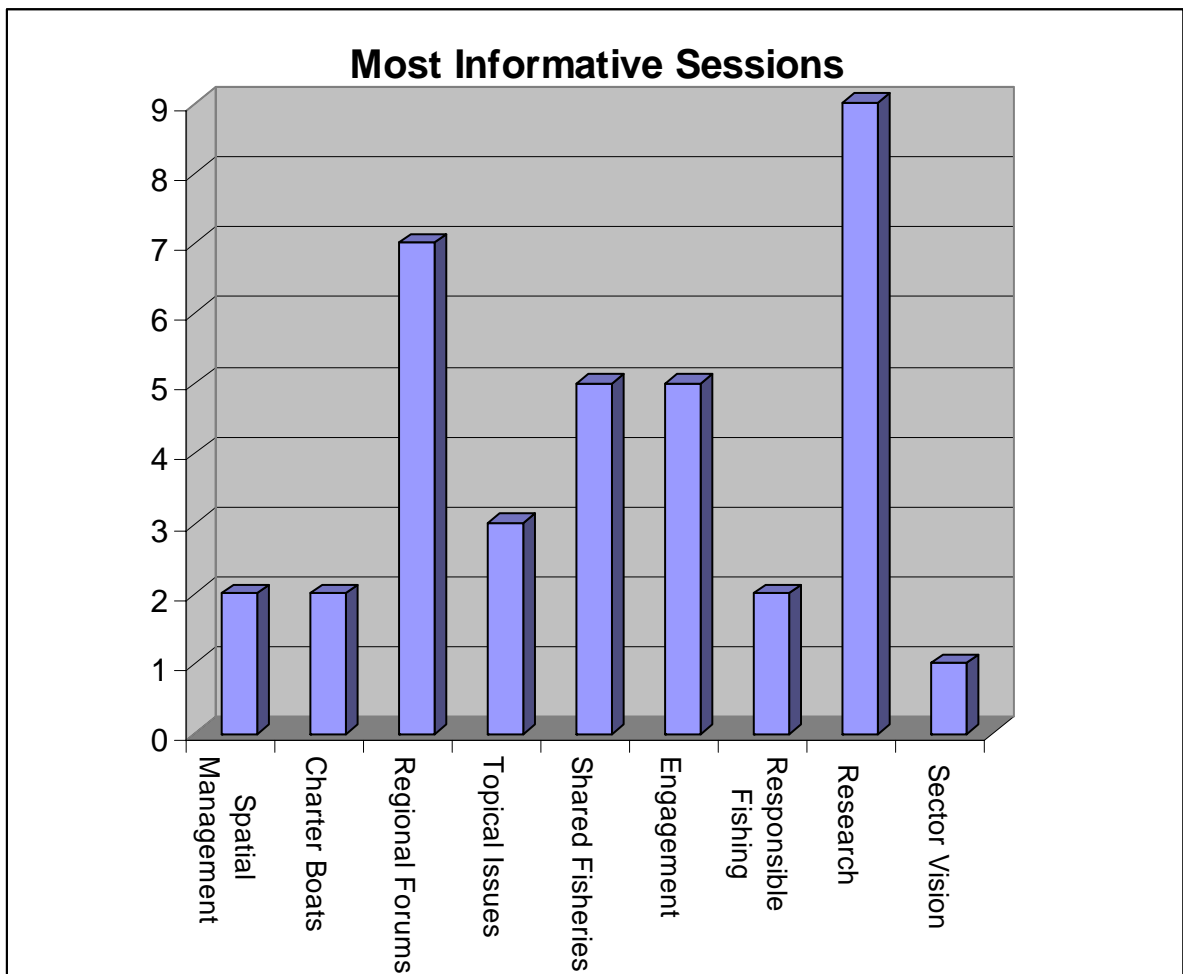
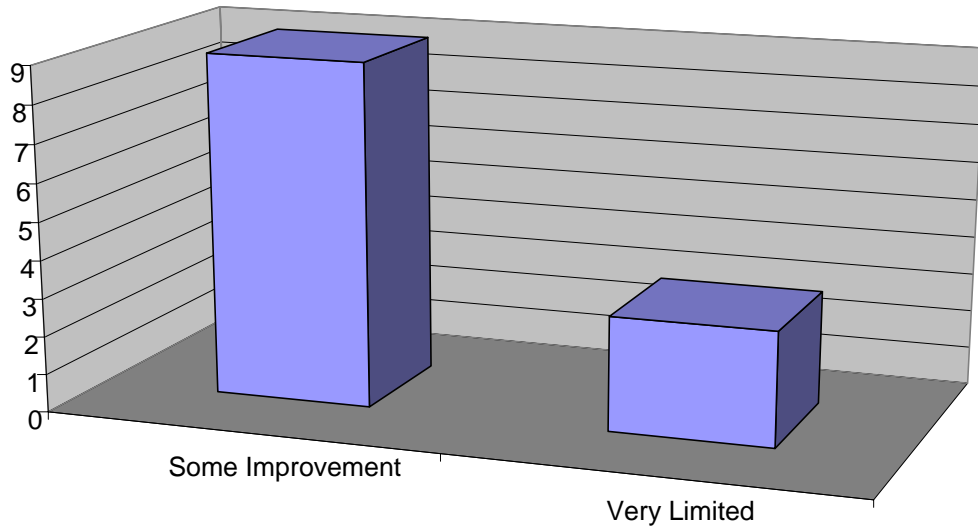
Is the concept of holding an annual meeting of regional recreational forums useful?



Will the outcomes of this meeting enhance the effectiveness of your forums?



Did the meeting improve your overall knowledge of recreational fisheries management?



Leigh Mitchell closed the meeting, thanking the delegates for their attendance and their energetic input over the two days.