

The Bite

News from MFish JANUARY 2007

TOWARDS \$1 BILLION BY 2025

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OCEAN SURVEY 20/20

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Shared Fisheries

Shaping the future



Ministry of
Fisheries
Te Taupūaki i nga tīni a Tangaroa



PHOTO: DAVID HANSFORD

Editorial

There is a lot going on right now – both inshore, and in our deepwater fisheries within and beyond our EEZ.

In some work areas, like the shared fisheries consultation, we are tidying up pieces of unfinished business. In others, like fisheries plans and standards, we are rolling out a new approach to managing fisheries.

How we share the catch between our recreational and commercial sectors is an issue that has been on the back burner for 20 years – ever since the start of the QMS. We need to make some progress here, so I urge you all to get involved in this consultation.

I also urge everyone to get involved in developing fisheries plans, and their environmental and allocation standards. These processes will involve many passionate people with different views about how our fisheries and marine life should be managed.

However, I believe everyone would agree that we need to achieve long-term sustainability in all areas of fisheries management. This must also be our goal if we want to retain

New Zealand's reputation for innovation and forward thinking in fisheries.

Towards this, there are a number of challenges we have to accept, particularly in the environmental impacts of fishing. I've been very pleased that the commercial sector has recognised these, and is working to address them. We have to keep that uptake moving forward.

The Ministry of Fisheries' draft Statement of Intent for 2007/08 covers all of this and more, in setting our proposed work programme for the coming year. Please look through it, and give us your thoughts.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the efforts of a fellow Aussie – Les Curtain – who is regarded by many as a founding father of New Zealand oyster aquaculture. Les is leaving the Ministry after 38 years.

Many thanks, Les, and have a great summer everyone.

JOHN GLAISTER





Shared Fisheries – shaping the future

The government's Shared Fisheries discussion paper is an important step forward in responding to issues raised by fishers for many years.

MFish is consulting on proposals that aim to improve management of shared fisheries – those that are shared between customary Māori, amateur and commercial fishers. Shared fisheries are usually inshore species – snapper, blue cod, paua and rock lobster are examples.

WHY DO WE NEED CHANGE?

We have a well regarded commercial fisheries management regime, and recognition of Māori commercial and non-commercial interests through the 1992 fisheries settlement. The current legislative framework still has significant shortcomings in respect of recognising the interests of amateur fishers, properly integrating those interests within the wider fisheries management framework, and providing greater certainty about future allocation to all sectors.

These shortcomings have led to real dissatisfaction and are increasingly apparent as fisheries management problems. There is ongoing contention and litigation, and loss of potential to undertake constructive fisheries management.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES?

The proposals seek to achieve two broad goals:

- To achieve best value from shared fisheries - whether the value is money, food, cultural tradition, or simply the pleasure of being outdoors and catching fish.
- To improve the certainty around allocation between the commercial, customary and amateur sectors. This should provide real gains for all fishers.





BETTER INFORMATION

Management of shared fisheries and recognition of interests is compromised by poor information, particularly the uncertain estimates of amateur catch. These proposals include more resourcing and use of more reporting to address that issue, as well as new research into the value obtained from the use of fisheries.

BETTER RECOGNISING AMATEUR AND CUSTOMARY VALUES

The paper sets out proposals that would mean more and bigger fish in the water, and the ability to rebuild depleted fisheries more quickly. Another proposal suggests the ability to use local area management to resolve competition between sectors. These are ways to recognise that amateur and customary fishing is an important part of our identity as New Zealanders, and should be provided for.

SETTING AND ADJUSTING AMATEUR AND COMMERCIAL ALLOCATIONS

These proposals answer the call to better describe how shared fisheries are divided up. The proposals include options for different approaches to set baselines and allow for future adjustments, and a guaranteed minimum tonnage for amateur fishers in each shared fishery, which would have priority over commercial fishing.

REPRESENTING AMATEUR FISHERS

Amateur fishers can and should have an important role in fisheries management, but they often find it difficult to get to the discussion table. An independent Amateur Fishing Trust is proposed that would work with existing amateur fishing organisations to develop a national body. Funded by government initially, the trust could coordinate views of amateur fishing organisations and help them be better

represented in fisheries management processes with other sectors.

BALANCING INTERESTS

Although these proposals recognise issues raised by the amateur sector, these are shared fisheries, and therefore changes need to recognise the rights and interests of all involved. The proposals include elements such as clarifying priority of allocation to Māori customary fishing under the Fisheries Act, and the consideration of redress for commercial fishers where significant reallocations occur. Some proposals adjust shares between commercial and amateur sectors. If changes effectively remove commercial assets, compensation should be considered.

The proposals address other issues that the commercial sector has raised – particularly certainty in allocation, better monitoring of amateur catch, and better organisation of the amateur sector. These proposals allow for better long-term planning and investment by the industry, and set the platform for ongoing cooperation with the amateur sector. They expand on what is already there and do not seek to replace what is working well for all sectors in particular fisheries.

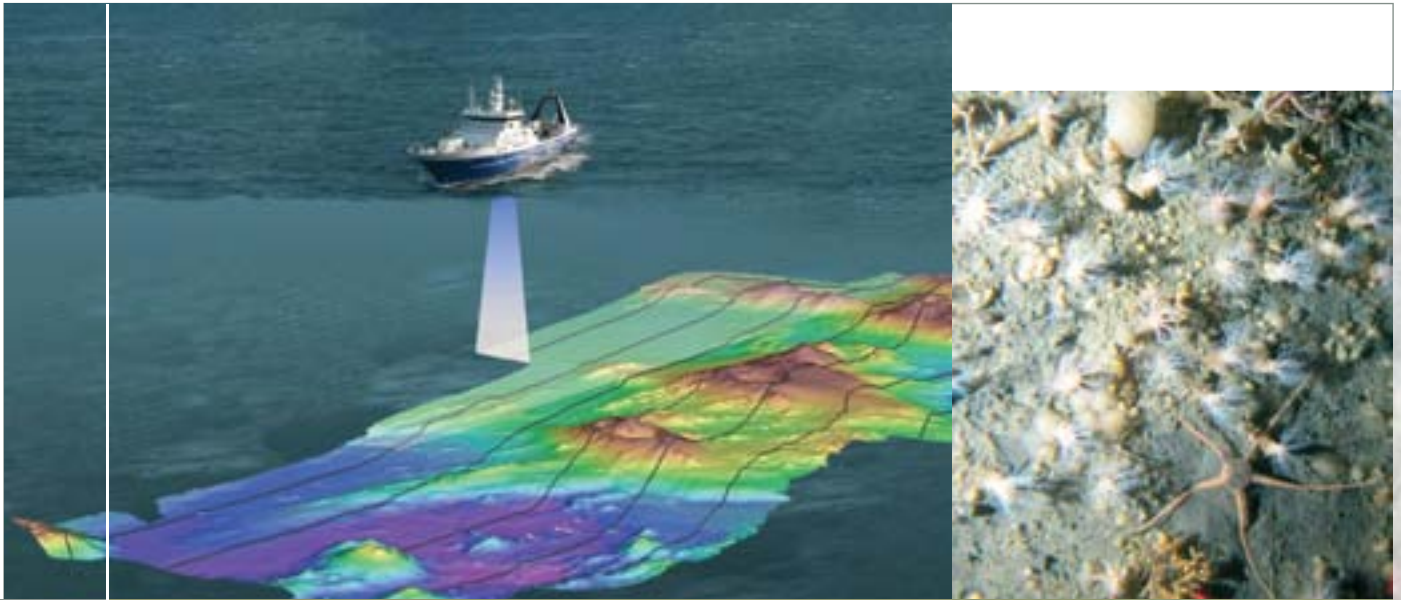
HAVE YOUR SAY

We would like to hear what you have to say about the proposals, what you agree with, what you don't, and why, and other ideas for constructively addressing issues recognising the rights and interests of other sectors. Take some time out to make a submission and play a part in moving the management of shared fisheries forward.

To get a copy of Shared Fisheries go to the Shared Fisheries pages of the MFish website (www.fish.govt.nz) or call 0800 666 675.

The closing date for submissions is 28 February 2007





Understanding soft sediment communities

The Ministry of Fisheries is leading the first Ocean Survey 20/20 project that will compare the lifeforms of the Chatham Rise with those of the Challenger Plateau. The project is a joint initiative with LINZ, DOC, and NIWA with input from a range of other organisations.

"We know very little about the animal communities that live on the seabed, particularly the soft sediments that cover much of our Exclusive Economic Zone," says project scientist Dr Mary Livingston. "More importantly, we know little about how crucial these communities are to the health of the marine environment and the role they play in sustaining our fish resources."

One of the first steps is to describe the types of communities and how they are distributed.

The Chatham Rise and Challenger Plateau have been chosen because they provide a strong contrast in terms of biological productivity, yet physically, they are quite similar. The Chatham Rise supports substantial deepwater fisheries (eg. hoki, hake, ling, orange roughy and oreos dories) but these are more localised on the Challenger Plateau.

"Zoning the ocean into different environmental categories for management purposes is a complex task," Mary says. "To date the greatest progress has been made using remote sensing and oceanic data. The Chatham/Challenger project will tell us a lot more about the biology of the seabed, and so help us ensure that bottom habitats are properly zoned and productivity maintained."

This work will dovetail with other initiatives such as the fishing industry's Benthic Protection Area proposal and will work towards meeting strategic goals under the Strategy for Managing the Environmental Effects of Fishing and the Marine Protected Areas Implementation Plan.

The first task of the project was to work out how much of these two very large areas of ocean could realistically be surveyed and sampled within the project framework. There are three voyages. The first in August 2006 used a type of acoustic mapping of the seabed.

The acoustic mapping method has the potential for identifying habitats on a broad scale, provided that the necessary links can be made between the acoustic signals and the biological communities. The sea-bed communities will be explored with deep-sea cameras and directly sampled with a range of tools such as epi-benthic sleds and sediment corers in two further voyages in April and May-June 2007.

This project is 100 percent funded with contributions from MFish, Land Information New Zealand, National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, and the Department of Conservation.





Increased transparency through fisheries standards

A process to increase transparency in fisheries management began with the launch of fisheries standards for public consultation in November. This follows on from September's (2006) issue of *The Bite* on adding value through objectives-based fisheries plans.

MFish National Environment Manager Steve Halley said standards will set out the acceptable performance levels in areas like the environmental effects of fishing, and the processes used to manage fisheries – like research and consultation.

The first three fisheries standards and a document explaining the standards programme were sent out to fisheries stakeholders for comment at the beginning of November: Stakeholder Consultation Process Standard, QMS Introduction Process Standard and Harvest Strategy Standard.

“The idea is to work with tangata whenua and stakeholders to determine appropriate standards that should apply to fisheries. The consultation period provides the opportunity for people to help develop the actual framework for managing fisheries. We look forward to getting comments back,” Mr Halley said.

There are 20 standards under development, ranging from

best practice for input and participation of tangata whenua to limiting and monitoring fishing-related impacts on Hector's dolphins or seabirds.

Mr Halley said the standards programme will increase transparency around how fisheries management decisions are made, and help stakeholders understand and take part in the process of managing our fisheries.

“It's about being consistent and sharing information. If people have access to the standards the Ministry is working to, they will have an understanding in advance of what to aim for and in some cases what to avoid. This will make planning for fishers an easier job and should provide a basis for people to contribute information and opinions on how our fisheries are managed. This will make it easier for the Ministry and Government to make decisions.”

The fisheries standards are available for viewing or downloading on the MFish website www.fish.govt.nz.

Interested parties can provide written feedback on the standards by writing to Tracey Steel, C/-Ministry of Fisheries, PO Box 1020, Wellington or tracey.steel@fish.govt.nz

The deadline for submissions is 31 March 2007.

Other standards being developed for consultation: benthic impact, seabird, Hector's/Maui dolphins, shark, sealion, input and participation of tangata whenua, harvest strategy, deemed value, governance and representation, purchase, service delivery, reporting, allocation, analysis and assessment of management options and environmental impact assessment.





Maintaining a valuable summer fishery

The Ministry of Fisheries is working with communities and local authorities to maintain one of our most valuable fisheries.

Gathering a feed of cockles, pipi, and tuatua at the beach is a popular summer activity in the Auckland/Coromandel region. However, some shellfish beds in the area are fragile and under threat, from a combination of harvesting pressures and habitat degradation.

Where shellfish habitat is degraded, the beds won't handle as much fishing pressure.

To ensure harvesting does not harm stocks that in many places are already under environmental pressure, the Ministry of Fisheries cut bag limits for cockle, pipi and tuatua in the northern area from 150 per person per day to 50 of each. At the time, this seemed a reasonable bag limit. However, people regularly take more than this because they believe that 50 is "not enough for a feed".

If shellfish gatherers want a higher bag limit, we may need

extra sustainability measures – like area closures or fishing seasons. So we need to work with the gatherers to come up with management measures that will work for them, yet still allow the fishery to be sustainable.

The Ministry believes the best way to get in touch with these people is through their communities. So we have asked local authorities in the region to help us do this, as they have various networks within the community.

We are also working with these local authorities to improve the habitat that supports healthy shellfish populations. Councils have a role in managing storm-water, and controlling sedimentation and pollution.

By keeping shellfish harvests within the limits of the fisheries and their environment we will make sure our valuable shellfisheries remain sustainable.



Government funding supports sustainable aquaculture development

Aquaculture is an industry sector that has clear opportunities for growth and innovation. It aims to grow to a \$1 billion sector by 2025, and the government is working to help it get there.

In December 2006, the government announced \$2.9 million in funding to help regional authorities develop Aquaculture Management Areas (AMAs) in their regions. This funding is the first step in the Government's response to the New Zealand Aquaculture Sector Strategy that was released in 2006. A key issue in that strategy was the need to build the confidence to invest, which this funding helps address.

Minister for Economic Development Trevor Mallard said further steps in the government's plan to support sustainable aquaculture development will be announced in early 2007.

Of the \$2.9 million, \$900,000 will help implement priority projects identified in Northland, Auckland and Waikato, improve the use of existing aquaculture space through research and innovation, increase Māori involvement in aquaculture planning, and establish regional partnerships. The remaining \$2 million will be available on a contestable basis over the next five years to partner councils in information gathering, consultation and AMA planning projects.



Bay of Plenty weaves a new net

An agreement between the Ministry of Fisheries and Bay of Plenty iwi and hapū opens the door to a new era in fisheries management.

The signing of this agreement formalises the relationship the Mai i Ngā Kuri a Whareki ki Tihirau Iwi Fisheries Forum and the Ministry of Fisheries have developed over the past four years. During this time, they have worked together on a number of Bay of Plenty-wide issues, including a starfish plague at Maketu and rāhui at Maunganui Maunga and Ohiwa Harbour. The forum has also provided support for local iwi to advance issues in their individual rohe.

The forum provides a sound platform for iwi to move beyond managing local impacts on their fishing grounds, to become part of the decision-making around wider management issues. This could include decisions that affect fish stocks they use and the impacts on a fish stock across its whole range.

The Bay of Plenty forum involves 10 iwi and hapū groups

– Ngaiterangi, Te Arawa, Ngāi Ranginui, Ngāti Pukenga, Ngāti Awa, Whakatohea, Ngaitai, Te Whanau a Maruhaeremuri, Waitaha, Ngāti Rangitihī – and covers the area from Bowentown in the western Bay of Plenty through to Whangaparaoa and Tihirau in the east.

Pou Hononga Mokohiti Brown says the MOU is the climax of his mahi. But he says that now the real work begins.

“This was the key to the door. Now the door is open for people working together to look at the issues. We all share the same goal of fish for the future, fish for our mokopuna.”

For Charlie Bluett, customary fisheries spokesman for Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa, the MOU provides a solid footing for looking after the kaimoana for future generations. Achieving that includes establishing well-resourced research facilities, information from which would also benefit the Ministry.

“It’s a broad kaupapa which we are yet to fully explore,” says Charlie. “Ngāti Awa has gone through the process of selecting their 22 kaitiaki and our focus will be to ensure fish resources are not over-harvested and that our kai does not become depleted. We are there for the interests of our mokopuna and our kaimoana.

"We want hands-on management of the rohe moana but it's vital that we do the research and be proactive in being kaitiaki, increasing the knowledge base through customary fisheries training programmes for instance."

Mokohiti says Ministry staff have much to offer in terms of scientific research, stock assessments, and analysis.

"The Ministry is investing significant resources into forums around the country. Young Māori scientists – like Melanie Russell in the Bay of Plenty – are working alongside kaitiaki to help them through fisheries management processes, and to articulate their kaimoana objectives into written management plans.

"The whole purpose is to assist kaitiaki to their fisheries aspirations, making sure they get access to relevant and timely information on which to make good decisions."

A key part of the mix is developing trust, says forum secretary and working party chair Tuwhakairiora Williams.

"The forum has been an important place for sharing information," he says. "When we established the forum over four years ago the knowledge base of our iwi groups, our understanding of the customary fisheries dimension of the 1992 settlement was scant. The forum has provided for that huge knowledge gap to be addressed. There has been huge learning for whānau, hapū and iwi as well as for the Ministry.

"One thing the Ministry does not have is information about customary practice, which is integral to the customary

fisheries implementation and rests with those whānau, hapū and iwi groups. With time the Ministry would like to harvest that information but it will take a lot of trust to get that right."

Trust will also help the parties come to a common understanding of what is meant by sustainable management of the fisheries resource.

"...our focus will be to ensure fish resources are not over-harvested and that our kai does not become depleted. We are there for the interests of our mokopuna and our kaimoana."

Charlie Bluett, Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa customary fisheries spokesperson.

"We need to find the common ground where parties can work together to develop sustainable management that reflects traditional practices but brings in contemporary research-based knowledge. It will take time for that to happen."

Engaging and embracing other fisheries sectors will be a natural progression for the forum, as Māori wear all three fishing hats – customary, recreational and commercial. But, Tuwhakairiora Williams says, balancing those imperatives will be an interesting challenge.



TE RUNANGĀ O NGĀTI AWA CUSTOMARY FISHERIES SPOKESMAN CHARLIE BLUETT GREET'S MINISTRY OF FISHERIES' CHIEF EXECUTIVE JOHN GLAISTER AT TE WHARE O TOROA MARAE IN THE BAY OF PLENTY.

PHOTO: WHAKATANE BEACON



Keeping our fisheries safe

While boaties and recreational fishers are out and about this summer enjoying the sea, sun and fish, fisheries officers from the Ministry of Fisheries have also been out monitoring catches and highlighting the poaching is theft campaign.

The campaign aims to help stem the tide of illegally caught and sold fish and shellfish that threatens the sustainability of key fish stocks and means less for everyone.

District Compliance Manager at Petone, Ross Thurston said that, to date, support for the campaign has been very good.

“We have received a lot of support from our stakeholders and partners on this initiative and so far the campaign has been going very well.”

While there had been a slow start to the recreational fishers season due to less than ideal weather conditions, Ross said that they expected things to change in the new year. “There are people who have not been able to take their prized asset out at all this year because of the weather but once the weather comes right, we are anticipating an influx of people.”

He said that these summer holidays would see a high

presence of fisheries officers on boat ramps out on the water monitoring recreational fishers.

Ian Bright, the District Compliance Manager in Auckland, agreed saying that the fisheries officers would be out there on the water over the holidays spreading the word and using a two pronged approach.

“We will be providing education before they go out, by way of pamphlets, and compliance when they come in.”

Ian said that generally the recreational fishers were pretty good at complying with the rules but there would always be those out there who ignored them.

“Preventing the poaching of any species will continue to be a priority.”

He said in northern areas there would be a focus on the poaching of fin fish such as snapper and grey mullet, the latter becoming an increasingly popular species for poaching.

In addition to education and compliance Ian said there was a move among the fisheries officers to generate intelligence flows, so if a member of the public saw something that did not look right, they would know who to get in touch with to raise their concerns.

Murray Pridham, District Compliance Officer in Dunedin said that like his North Island counterparts, South Island fisheries officers would be out over summer and the weekends ensuring people were complying with the rules and not taking more than their daily limit.



A plan to share Dunedin's cockles



The sweet, delectable taste of cockles may not yet be the hit with New Zealand palates that it is overseas, but that could soon change. A new shellfish operation could see Dunedin dubbed the country's cockle capital.

In 2000, Ngai Tahu came up with a draft fisheries management plan for the Otago cockle (also known as the tuaki, or little neck clam) fishery, which saw the local runanga take up the reins. Spokesman for Te Runanga o Otakou, Hoani Langsbury said, given the beds were in their back yard, "we recognised that we should be the ones writing the plan".

Over the past year, a Tuaki Working Group has been updating the draft plan, with a view to it becoming a formal fisheries plan under the Fisheries Act, and the core management framework for the Otago Tuaki Fishery. Consultation with other users of the cockle resource is required before this can occur.

The objective of the plan will be a sustainable, healthy, abundant, and accessible fishery that provides for the community's cultural, customary, recreational, and commercial needs.

The primary commercial fishing company is Southern Clams who have harvested beds in Blueskin Bay for the past 20 years and believe that the beds in Otago Harbour may be particularly productive.

It is not all about the money for Southern Clams and Otakou, with an emphasis on ensuring the beds are harvested

sustainably. A Tuaki Management Committee comprising customary, recreation and commercial representatives will be central to the plan.

Allen Frazer, Policy Analyst for the Ministry of Fisheries says MFish is supportive of the plan, and keen to hear what other users of the cockle resource and the community think of the proposals.

"It is a case of striking the right balance. A broader base of harvesting areas will help spread commercial effort away from areas of high recreational and customary use, ensuring a consistent supply of export cockles can be maintained. The plan also needs to ensure any new areas are carefully monitored with no wider environmental effects."

In terms of the way the runanga and Southern Clams had managed to get to this point, Mr Langsbury was positive.

"It sets a very good model for other iwi around the country," he said.

Allen agrees, "Iwi often have a particularly strong interest in ensuring sustainability because of their long cultural association with the fishery, and also because they are major quota holders. Once a few plans like this one are up and running I think partnerships will snowball."





Seabird safety a complex issue

The Ministry of Fisheries is working with industry to solve the issue of seabird deaths in New Zealand's deep sea trawl fisheries.

"Seabird mitigation in our deep sea trawl fisheries is a complex problem, which the Ministry is working on in conjunction with the industry and environmental interests," says MFish policy analyst Spencer Clubb.

"The single biggest factor affecting seabird deaths in deep sea trawl fisheries is the amount of offal being discharged while the trawl gear is in the water. Currently, different measures are being trialed to reduce the amount of offal discharged, the timing of the offal discharge and the attractiveness of offal."

One problem with seabirds and trawlers comes from birds being so focused on the offal dumped overboard that they

don't see the warp cables and get 'run over' by or fly into them. Birds also get caught in the net itself as they try to feed on the fish caught in it.

Ensuring that offal is not discharged while trawl nets are out, and mincing or cutting waste into smaller pieces that may be less attractive to seabirds may help to reduce the chance that they will be in a position to be caught.

Tori lines and other bird scaring devices are being used to keep birds away from the trawl warps, with varying success. But removing the source of the problem – offal discharge – is proving even more difficult to address.

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Species characteristics can increase risk

Certain population characteristics of albatrosses and petrels mean that deaths caused by fishing could have a significant impact on their populations over time.

These birds typically have an extended maturity time of three to 15 years, produce one chick per year, form pair-bonds for life and may take a long time to reform a new pair bond if one partner is killed. If one of a breeding pair dies, the chick almost always dies too and the surviving partner may take many years to nest again with a new partner.


New Zealand is an important breeding ground for around eighty seabird species and has the greatest variety of albatross and petrel species in the world.

“Technical measures, such as fish mincers that reduce the size of offal are one option, but we also need behavioural change, Spencer says. “This means better management of factory waste and holding on to offal and unwanted fish.

“However, New Zealand’s trawl fleet is diverse and not all vessels can hold offal on board all of the time. We are working with the industry on this.

“Management measures being developed are intended to be enabling, allowing fishers to use the most effective methods for their vessels.”

As part of this ongoing work, MFish is intending to review the National Plan of Action to reduce seabird catch in New Zealand fisheries. This will ensure the mitigation tools used, reporting requirements, and monitoring are all best aligned to achieving the goals of the plan and expectations of Government.

The work is being done in parallel with the development of fisheries plans standards. The first draft standards were released in November and the next release, scheduled for early 2007 will include the Seabird Standard, which will set out clearer objectives for reductions in seabird by-catch. 



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**KOTAHI MOANA – KEI KONEI TE TĪMATATANGA
ONE OCEAN - IT STARTS HERE**

Second SPRFMO meeting held in Hobart

November saw strong progress towards an agreement for managing fishing activity in the world's largest ocean.

Participants from 20 States met in Hobart, Australia at the second meeting of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO), joined by special observers and inter-governmental and non-governmental representatives

Jane Willing, MFish's Manager International says the SPRFMO has been a major initiative for New Zealand and the recent meeting was an opportunity to strengthen relationships between the parties involved.

"Our objective is to see a management regime established that draws on international best practice and sound governance regimes before fish stocks in the region are over exploited," says Jane.

"We want to see effective high seas conservation and management for this part of the world. It is an unusual ocean, with currently only a couple of key fisheries, with Orange

Roughly on seamounts and Jack Mackerel to the eastern side of the high seas. There's an enormous amount of area that has not been exploited and it will be great to get an agreement in place now for long-term protection."

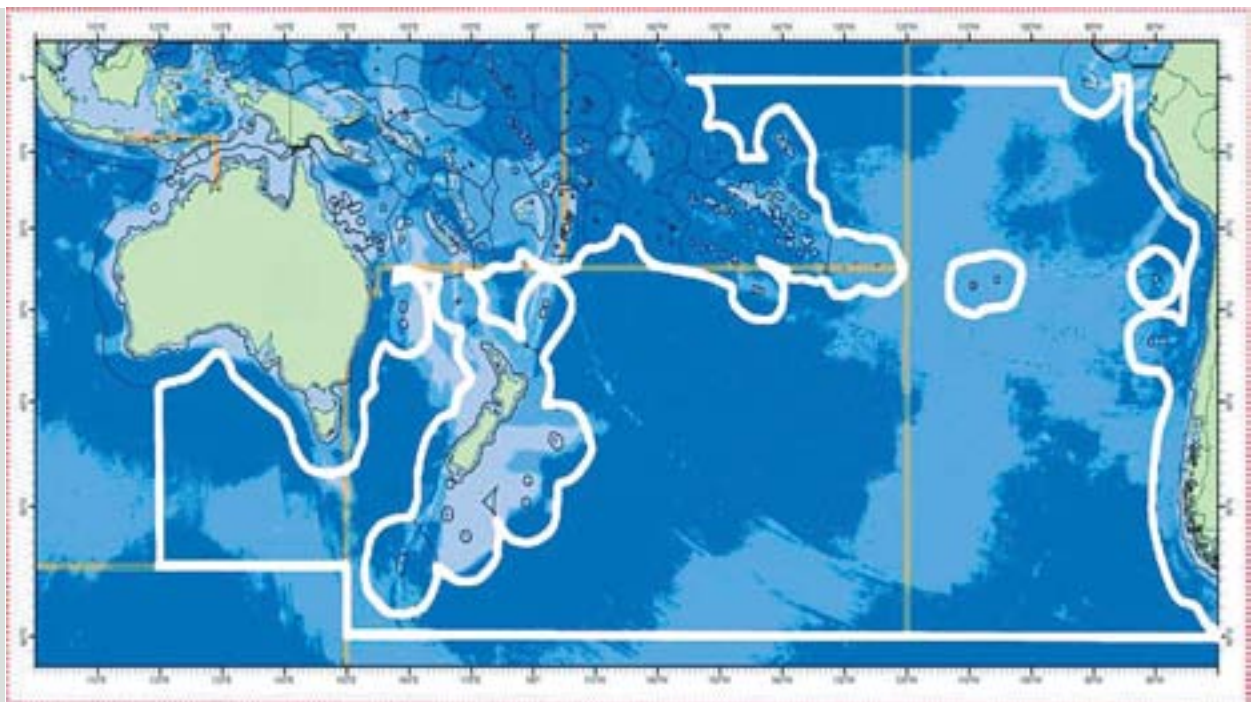
"Some key objectives were met during this meeting. A positive discussion was held on the draft convention text and those attending the meeting were generally in agreement about creating a forward looking RFMO. That is extremely positive as there is a mixture of coastal states within the region and distant fishing states with interests."

As well as useful discussions on governance, participants discussed mechanisms that could be used to hold both States and the RFMO accountable for actions in the area.

"Where we struggled to get an outcome was in moves to adopt a range of interim measures."

Three such measures formed a package. A cap on total fishing effort, measures to protect vulnerable marine areas from destructive fishing practices and interim procedures for the collection and provision of data.

"Although it's disappointing, we believe there is enough good will and further opportunities to work with countries to get the package adopted in next meeting in Chile in April 2007."



THE SPRFMO COVERS VAST AREAS OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST OCEAN.

Stronger protection for Hector's dolphins



PHOTO: DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

A public awareness campaign and new regulations will make our coastal waters safer for dolphins this summer.

The regulations mean that non-commercial set net fishers must stay with their nets at all times when setting between the Waiau and Clarence Rivers on the east coast of the South Island, and in Southland's Te Waewae Bay.

"The restrictions target areas where Hector's dolphins are often seen and are thought to be at risk from set nets," says MFish National Environment Manager Steve Halley. "We are also running a public awareness campaign to encourage responsible set netting fishing amongst our non-commercial fishers and working with the fishing industry to improve commercial fishers' voluntary Code of Practice.

"Hector's dolphins are only found in New Zealand waters and are one of the rarest marine dolphins in the world. Scientists

estimate as few as 7200 are left. Population hotspots of these dolphins are quite local and this has allowed us to be quite specific in the restrictions."

Steve says existing controls in Canterbury, along with the new restrictions and heightened public awareness will help minimise the effects of fishing on Hector's dolphins while a Threat Management Plan is jointly developed by MFish and the Department of Conservation.

These measures are not the complete solution. After this summer, the Ministry will assess how effective these measures have been, particularly current voluntary controls, and consider additional or alternative measures as part of the Threat Management Plan process.



Hector's dolphins: some key facts

- Hector's dolphin is New Zealand's only endemic cetacean (marine mammal) and is one of the world's rarest dolphins with a population estimated at around 7,270.
- They are an inshore coastal species with a limited home range.
- One of the biggest risks to the dolphin population are the number of deaths through dolphins becoming entangled in fishing gear.
- Set net fisheries appear to pose the greatest fishing - related risks to Hector's dolphin populations as the dolphins' inshore distribution overlaps with commercial and non-commercial set net fisheries.
- Slow reproductive rates means Hector's dolphins are threatened by even low numbers of deaths.



White pointer sharks will be fully protected within 200 nautical miles of New Zealand and from fishing by New Zealand-flagged boats on the high seas from April this year.

The species will be protected under the Wildlife Act. It will be illegal to hunt, kill or harm a white pointer shark within New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the 200 nautical mile limit around the coast, and it will be illegal to possess or trade in any part of a white pointer.

The species will be protected on the high seas (outside the EEZ) under the Fisheries Act, which applies to New Zealand-flagged boats.

Shark nets will still be used around beaches in Dunedin, and fishers accidentally catching and killing white pointers will not be prosecuted provided they register the death with the Department of Conservation (deaths within EEZ) or the Ministry of Fisheries (high seas deaths).

Fisheries amendment to favour sustainability

The Government is proposing to change fisheries legislation to make decisions made under the Fisheries Act more cautious and favour sustainability when there is little or poor information.

"I want the ability to act cautiously when I think it is necessary for the long-term sustainability of the fishery or the marine ecosystem," says Fisheries Minister Jim Anderton. "Current fisheries legislation is not completely clear about this precautionary approach. I want to make the legislation clear."

The current ambiguity was one of the many issues in a recent High Court action, initiated by fishing industry interests around sustainability measures introduced in a North Island orange roughy fishery.

"Our knowledge of species, and especially ecosystem behaviour, is often incomplete or of unknown quality. So we need to act cautiously, when information on sustainability is uncertain or limited," Jim Anderton says.

This is referred to internationally as the 'precautionary approach'. The original policy intention when the Fisheries Act 1996 was being developed was to implement this precautionary approach for New Zealand fisheries management. However, the current wording of the Act is ambiguous over how a decision-maker should act when information is uncertain or absent.



South Coast Reserve for Wellington

The Kupe/Kevin Smith Marine Reserve is to be created off Wellington's scenic South Coast providing a showcase for the unique marine ecosystems found there, Fisheries Minister Jim Anderton and Conservation Minister Chris Carter announced in December.

But the boundaries of the 840 hectare reserve have been altered from those originally proposed to improve enforcement and maintain opportunities for recreational and commercial fishers using the coast.

"A balance has been struck in protecting a representative slice of the South Coast marine environment while maintaining a local sustainable fishing industry," Jim Anderton said.

"The well-known fishing boats at Island Bay, as characterised in Rita Angus' iconic painting, 'Island Bay', will continue to be a feature of the coastal landscape, as well as allowing an underwater wilderness area to flourish."

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