



Ministry of
Fisheries
Te Tautiaki i nga tini a Tangaroa

Shared Fisheries

Introduction to the public discussion paper

November 2006

Note: This document is an introduction to the full discussion paper. Please refer to the main paper before making your submission. You can download a copy of the discussion paper from the Shared Fisheries pages at www.fish.govt.nz or obtain a copy by calling **0800 666 675** or contacting the Ministry of Fisheries.

■ Message from the Minister

Fishing has always been important to New Zealand and New Zealanders. It is a major component of our economy and a central part of our heritage, our culture and our national identity.

Those of us who go fishing have a lot in common. Whether we fish for fun off the beach, to earn a living, or to put food on the table, we all share the same resource and the same interests in ensuring it is managed well.

The policy proposals introduced below, and set out more completely in the discussion document, focus on our “shared fisheries” – the fisheries where customary, recreational and commercial uses intersect. Here, the common interests of these users can be easily forgotten in the face of competing demands for access.

The challenge before us is to manage these important shared fisheries in a way that ensures New Zealand and New Zealanders get as much value as possible from them, not only today but into the future.

The ideas set out in the discussion paper represent some new proposals to unlock greater value from our shared fisheries. We face significant problems in these fisheries, and new approaches and decisive action are required.

All New Zealanders have and will continue to have a basic right to catch fish. But that accepted, we need to make some major changes if we are to achieve greater certainty in allocation decisions, build management capacity and produce more overall value from the fisheries.

It is important that we get the policy and legal framework right and this is where you, the fishers, come in. I encourage you to get involved with the process and play your part in moving the policy discussion ahead.

Please read the discussion paper, think about the proposals and options raised, and send us your views. All submissions will be carefully read and considered as part of the policy development process. You can be sure that your voice will be heard.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts over the next few months.



Hon Jim Anderton
Minister of Fisheries

October 2006

■ Shaping the shared fishery

The discussion paper has been produced by the Ministry of Fisheries (MFish), guided by decisions of the Minister of Fisheries and Cabinet, so people can have their say on proposals to improve the management of New Zealand's shared fisheries. Shared fisheries are those in which commercial, amateur and customary fishers all participate. Most shared fisheries are inshore fisheries (including snapper, blue cod, kahawai, rock lobster and paua) – but they also include offshore fisheries such as gamefish, and freshwater fisheries such as eels.

The overall goal of the changes being proposed is to increase the value New Zealanders get from the use of shared fisheries. Value can be defined in terms of money, as it is by the commercial sector, but also in terms of the values that amateur and customary fishers seek – food, cultural tradition, or simply the pleasure of being outdoors and catching fish. Improved management systems will aim to ensure that the use of fisheries resources reflects the value placed on them by different groups.

■ Why change things?

New Zealand's shared fisheries are under increasing pressure. Effective management is currently undermined by poor information on amateur catch and uncertainty surrounding the process for allocating available catch between commercial, customary, and amateur fishers. This situation needs to change to secure the future of shared fisheries in New Zealand. Doing nothing would simply ignore the environmental risks associated with management decisions based on poor information, the costs of ongoing contention and litigation, and the loss of value associated with inadequate incentives for all sectors to protect and improve shared fisheries.

The ultimate aim of shared fisheries management is to provide opportunities for New Zealanders to get the best value – the best mix of financial value and other values – from the use of our fisheries resources. As with all fisheries management, there is an overriding need to protect the sustainability of fisheries resources.

At present it is difficult to assess the value of fisheries to the customary and amateur sectors because there is too little information available about who is catching what, where and when. Lack of good information on catch makes it difficult to manage fisheries sustainably. One of the main objectives of the proposals and options in the discussion paper is to produce better information about the use of shared fisheries and so strengthen management.

Management of shared fisheries will also be strengthened by improving how value is distributed. Where rules for allocation processes are not well defined, fishers from all sectors become concerned over the future of their access to fisheries resources. This uncertainty discourages conservation initiatives and cooperation between the different sectors that use shared fisheries, because each group is worried that the benefits of its work will be lost to others in the allocation process.

So, another main objective of the proposals in the discussion paper is to produce a better allocation process that is clear and takes into account different fishing values.

■ **About the discussion paper**

The ideas in the discussion paper have been approved for public consultation by Cabinet. However, they are not set in concrete. All can be changed or developed in response to public feedback. Where a clear view has been formed about the best way forward, ideas are presented as proposals for discussion. In other cases there may be more than one path that could be taken. Here you will find two or more options are presented.

Some of the ideas in the discussion paper are new and different, but they have not been raised lightly. Debate will help produce better solutions and this will benefit all New Zealanders.

■ Key ideas

The key ideas in the discussion paper are:

- > All New Zealanders have a basic right to catch fish.
- > Shared fisheries should be managed in a way that produces the best value – including both financial and other values – for New Zealanders.
- > Better information about the amateur catch in shared fisheries is needed for sound management decisions that will ensure sustainability and recognise each sector's legitimate interests. This will require more effective research and monitoring. Allocation decision-making could also be strengthened by getting better information on the relative value of amateur and commercial fishing.
- > A basic level of amateur take should be protected through a guaranteed minimum tonnage in each shared fishery, which would have priority over commercial fishing.
- > Māori customary take permitted under the customary fishing regulations (or regulation 27 or 27A of the amateur fishing regulations) should be provided for when setting allocations.
- > Amateur and customary values should be more explicitly recognised than they are now in setting the Total Allowable Catch for shared fisheries.
- > Allocating the Total Allowable Catch among the commercial and amateur sectors needs to be a more certain process than it is now. This means providing processes both for re-setting baseline allocations and for future adjustments that are aimed at gaining maximum value from shared fisheries.
- > Tools for local area management should consider whether exclusion of particular fishing methods or all commercial fishing would lead to an increase in value.
- > Redress should be considered for significant shifts in allocation or access.
- > Amateur fishers can and should have a bigger role to play in the management of shared fisheries. This could be brought about through a trust that would work to ensure amateur fishers were involved in fisheries management.

If adopted, the proposals in the discussion paper will require further detailed development. Putting the proposed shared fisheries management framework into action may take several years.

The proposals in the paper deal exclusively with the interactions between customary, amateur and commercial fishing, and how to ensure the best use of New Zealand's shared fisheries. They do not cover aquaculture, international fisheries, allocation between fishers and other users of ocean resources, non-extractive use of fisheries, illegal fishing, or measures primarily intended to ensure that fishing is environmentally sustainable.

■ **Structure of the discussion paper**

The discussion paper presents proposals and options under the following sections:

Section 2: Getting better information on catch and value

Section 3: Setting the Total Allowable Catch

Section 4: Priorities for allocating the Total Allowable Catch

Section 5: Setting and adjusting amateur and commercial allocations

Section 6: Local area management

Section 7: Redress following adjustments in allocations or access

Section 8: Representing amateur fishers' interests

■ Have your say

We are seeking your views on the proposals and options contained in the discussion paper:

- > What do you think of the specific proposals raised in the paper?
Why do you support or not support them?
- > Where there are options presented, which option do you favour?
Why? Is there another possibility that should be on the list?
- > Do you think some of these fisheries management reforms are more urgent than others?
What do you think should be the priorities for action?
- > What shared fisheries should have the highest priority for attention – particularly under the proposals in section 5.1 (re-setting baseline allocations in key fisheries) of the discussion document?
- > What other approaches could be taken to address the issues raised?

You can find out more about the proposals by:

- > Reading the full discussion paper. The paper can be downloaded from the Shared Fisheries pages on the MFish website (www.fish.govt.nz) or obtained by calling **0800 666 675** or contacting the Ministry of Fisheries.
- > Coming along to a public consultation meeting. These will be held around the country from November to mid-December 2006. Details for these meetings will be advertised in major metropolitan and provincial newspapers and on the MFish website.
- > Checking the Shared Fisheries pages on the MFish website (www.fish.govt.nz) for background information, questions and answers, and information on the consultation process.

Please let us know what you think before **28 February 2007** by:

- > Sending a letter by email to shared.fisheries@fish.govt.nz or by post to Shared Fisheries Consultation, Ministry of Fisheries, PO Box 1020, Wellington.
- > Filling out and returning the submission form available on the website, from MFish staff at the consultation meetings, or by calling **0800 666 675**.
- > Filling out the online submission form on the Shared Fisheries pages of the MFish website (www.fish.govt.nz).

A summary of submissions will be carried out and made available on the MFish website.

Please note that all submissions are subject to the Official Information Act and, if requested, MFish may need to release information in submissions. If you have any objection to releasing information in your submission, please indicate the parts you think should be withheld and the reasons. MFish may still have to release all or part of the submission.

MFish will be updating the Shared Fisheries pages on the website (www.fish.govt.nz) regularly so you can stay up-to-date with the shared fisheries consultation and management reform process.

■ **How will final decisions be made?**

MFish will consider the submissions made on the discussion paper, carry out further study and develop recommendations for the Government. This process will involve working with other government departments to ensure that a consistent and coherent approach is taken. Final decisions on reforms, and the nature and timing of implementation, will be taken by the Cabinet in mid-2007.

Ministry of Fisheries

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