

Meeting Notes: North Island-South East

Regional Recreational Forum

Saturday, 9 June 2007, Napier

Open Meeting Meeting chair, Paul Creswell (MFish) opened the meeting at 9.00 pm and welcomed members. Paul welcomed Leigh Mitchell and her new East Coast Inshore Team, and Ray McKay and Craig Petherick to the forum.

Attendees

Paul Creswell (Chair, MFish)
Edward Beetham (Wairarapa Sports Fishing Club)
Wayne Bicknell (Hawkes Bay Sports Fishing Club)
Alain Jorion (Gisborne/Tatapouri Sports Fishing Club)
Colin Murray (Hawkes Bay Sports Fishing Club)
James Parahi (Pania Surfcasting Club)
George Zander (Ngawi Sport Fishing Club)
Jenny Hills (Mahia Boating Club)
Hilton Webb (Gisborne/Tatapouri Sports Fishing Club)
Simon Mills (Gisborne/Tatapouri Sports Fishing Club)
Leigh Mitchell (MFish Fisheries Operations)
Andy Warmbrunn (MFish Fisheries Operations)
Siu Montgomery (MFish Fisheries Operations)
Alicia McKinnon (MFish Fisheries Operations)
Ray McKay (MFish Fisheries Compliance)
Craig Petherick (MFish Fisheries Compliance)

Apologies No apologies

Meeting Introduction Paul Creswell confirmed the two main agenda items. These were for forum members to meet with the new East Coast Inshore Team to inform them about their local fisheries and to meet with members of the Napier Fisheries Compliance team to discuss local compliance issues.

Other items on the agenda included the MFish Update Newsletter, Danish seining in Hawke's Bay, häpuka weights, and a national recreational fishing forum

Corresp. **Incoming Correspondence:**

- E-mail received from Wayne Bicknell requesting information on Danish seining in Hawke's Bay.
- E-mail from Alain Jorion about an article he drafted for *Fishing News*.

- Various e-mails from forum members about their availability to attend the meeting.

Outgoing Correspondence:

- A submission from the NI-SE Recreational Forum of the Shared-Fisheries Consultation Document – a copy was sent to members.
- April 2007 MFish Update Newsletter.
- The minutes of last NI-SE forum meeting.
- Emails concerning notification of today’s meeting including draft agenda.

Meeting the East Inshore Team

Leigh Mitchell introduced the three new fisheries analysts that had recently joined the East Coast Inshore Team - Andy Warmbrunn, Siu Montgomery, and Alicia McKinnon.

This team is based in Napier and is primarily responsible for managing fisheries along the south-east coast of the North Island (ie, Fisheries Management Area 2).

Leigh noted that Andy would take over the role of co-ordinator for this forum.

Andy, Siu and Alicia briefly outlined their background and interests, and highlighted their main work areas as follows:

- Andy – finfish, seaweeds, NI-SE Recreational Forum;
- Siu – Eel, freshwater, and shellfish fisheries, Te Kupenga Forum, and local government liaison;
- Alicia – rock lobster, paua, commercial sector relationships.

Leigh noted that she was currently advertising to fill one more vacancy in the team.

Each forum member introduced themselves to the East Coast Inshore Team and provided a brief description of their local inshore fisheries noting any initiatives, concerns, issues, etc.. This provided an opportunity for forum members to impart their local knowledge and expertise onto the new East Coast Inshore Team.

The main points raised by each member is summarised below.

Wayne Bicknell – Hawke’s Bay

- The current deemed value system is failing to ensure local inshore stocks remain sustainable in long-term as commercial catches regularly exceed the TACCs.
- There has been a big improvement in local fisheries groups talking to each other to address local management issues.

Colin Murray – Hawke’s Bay

- The value that recreational fishing contributes to the national and local economy is under estimated – eg, the actual ‘value’ (\$\$) of recreational fishing boats belonging to local club members is worth over \$1,000,000,000.
- The size of local finfish stocks is now much smaller because of commercial fishing pressure and a substantial increase in local recreational fishing effort – there had been a significant decline in local catch rates. Urgent action is now required.
- The deemed value system is the biggest threat to Hawke’s Bay fisheries as TACCs are failing to constrain commercial catches – this impacts on recreational fishing.
- Local fishers are working together with the commercial sector to look at ways to improve local fisheries.

Simon Mills - Gisborne

- The existing QMAs are too large in size and is causing problems of localised depletion of important inshore fish species.
- Few young people are getting involved in local fisheries management and are relying on the older generation to represent their interests.
- Commercial trawling is having a big impact on fish abundance around Lottin Point, particularly when trawlers target fish during the spawning season. There has been a notable decline in fish numbers over past five years.

Hilton Webb – Gisborne

- There has been a significant decline in fish abundance over past five years. Hapuka numbers are greatly reduced and fishers are now having to fish grounds further offshore.
- Most bottom species have declined and this is linked to an increase in recreational fishing effort over the past 10 years. It is now timely to review local recreational bag limits to reflect the increasing number of recreational fishers within the region.
- There has been a decline in the number of local commercial fishing vessels, however, the size of the remaining vessels has got bigger.
- Clubs should be more active in monitoring and educating people about recreational fishing surveys.

George Zander - Ngawi

- Main recreational species are butterfish, kingfish, moki, hapuka, and snapper.
- There has been a decline in hapuka numbers within local waters due to an increase in charter and recreational boats.
- Blue cod fishery is in good shape with lots of fish of large size.
- Biggest problem in area is the local rock lobster fishery due to overfishing by the commercial sector. Only lobsters caught now are just over the minimum legal size – don’t see large lobsters anymore. Supports industry’s decision to shelve ACE over the next two years to reduce fishing pressure. Believes the CRA 4 QMA should be smaller.
- Visitor numbers to the area has increased and this is causing problems for some fish and shellfish species. The need to launch boats directly off the beach does restrict recreational fishing activities.
- Fishers can no longer collect paua above the minimum size limit due to high fishing pressure.

Edward Beetham - Wairarapa

- Main recreational species are blue cod, tarakihi, hāpuka, albacore and various sharks.
- Local hāpuka and rock lobster fisheries now under considerable stress due to increase in the number of charter and commercial vessels (rock lobster vessels with bigger horsepower now able to fish most areas along the coast).
- Recreational bag limits should not be reduced if industry is primarily responsible for a decline in stock size.
- The NI-SE Recreational Forum is working very well.

Jenny Hill – Mahia

- There has been a large increase in recreational fishing effort around Mahia as the area has become a popular holiday destination.
- Main recreational species are hāpuka and tarakihi.
- Not much inshore fishing takes place now as local fishers are having to fish further offshore.
Catches of hāpuka are decreasing as fishing for other species gets harder.
- The number of charter boats has increased, particularly from Napier.
- Big game fishing off Mahia also increasing – albacore, marlin, bigeye tuna.
- Presence of commercial fishing reduces the availability of large fish to recreational fishers.

Alain Jorion – Gisborne

- Main target species is tarakihi (particularly over summer) and hāpuka.
- Still good fishing within Gisborne region. However, there has been a substantial decline in local hāpuka and rock lobster populations.
- There has been a big increase in commercial rock lobster effort in recent years on reefs close to the two local public boat ramps within the Gisborne area. The reason why commercial fishers concentrate so much effort in the traditional public areas near town is due to the displacement the marine reserve has caused, as well the increase of fuel. Localised fishing effort has led to spatial conflict with recreational fishers (commercial can also take smaller legal sized males as they grow to 52mm during the winter before the public waits for them to shell and grow to 54mm in the summer), and as a result, very little recreational rock lobster fishing occurs - the recreational allocation is unlikely to now be caught.
- Supports the use of telson clipping to reduce illegal fishing within the rock lobster fishery.
- Fishers are starting to catch gemfish and bluenose in deeper areas.

James Parahi – Napier

- Main target species is snapper, red gurnard, trevally, lemonfish, rays and elephantfish.
- Surfcasters don't have the same type of issues facing boat fishers.
- Has concerns about the local kahawai stock – decline in abundance in recent years.
- Land development at Ocean Beach is reducing local access for surfcasting.

Paul and Leigh thanked members for providing valuable insights on their local fisheries. Leigh stated that many issues raised were common amongst members and her team would explore ways to investigate these issues over time.

Action: 1) MFish to provide an overview on the distribution of catches in the local rock lobster fishery (CRA 4) at the next meeting.

**April 2007
MFish Update
Newsletter**

Paul Creswell summarised the April 2007 MFish Update newsletter and provided updated information where appropriate.

Leigh Mitchell provided a brief update on the Shared-Fisheries Initiative. MFish had received a total of 610 submissions and a summary of the main points raised in submissions is available from the MFish website (www.fish.govt.nz). MFish is currently preparing detailed policy advice in light of the submissions. MFish expects Cabinet to make decisions on the process for progressing any reforms by the middle of this year. Leigh noted that although dependent on this process, the forum will have further opportunities to provide input into the development of specific proposals. Members should visit the MFish website to keep informed on the progress of this initiative.

Leigh informed the forum about work her team was undertaking to address the deemed value/overfishing issue within QMA 2. She noted that her team is involved in a proposal to review deemed values for specific inshore stocks (including local finfish stocks) to change the incentives for fishers to constrain catches within their ACE holdings. Leigh noted in most fisheries the problem of overcatch was not widespread but restricted to about 1-4 individual fishers.

Leigh advised the deemed value proposal will shortly be released for consultation as part of this year's October 2007 sustainability round. The forum will receive a notice and summary of the proposal once MFish's Initial Position Paper is released for consultation in a few week's time plus directions on where to find the full paper on the website. Members will have an opportunity to submit written submissions on the proposal. Any changes to individual deemed values will be effective at the start of the next fishing year (ie, 1 October 2007).

Andy Warmbrunn stated that he is developing a database that will review commercial catches against TACCs on an ongoing basis. This will enable future problems of overcatch to be identified more quickly.

Action: 2) The forum will be notified by e-mail when MFish releases the deemed value proposal for consultation.

**Local
compliance
issues**

Ray McKay and Craig Petherick introduced themselves to the forum. Ray is the District Compliance Manager and Craig is a fishery officer; both with the Napier District Compliance Team. This team is responsible for fisheries compliance within the Mahia to Cape Palliser area.

Ray provided information about his compliance team and what they do. The team has seven fishery officers dealing with commercial, recreational, customary and poaching activities. Five officers are based in Napier and two

officers are based in Masterton. The team also looks after 12 honorary fishery officers. Each office works to set operational directives that determines where he places his compliance resources each year. He highlighted that fishery officers spend more time in the field than in the past and more effort is being given to increasing compliance within recreational fisheries.

Ray believed the level of offending had declined due to a range of factors including increased public awareness about poaching (Coastwatch), more education, and introduction of infringement notices. However, there had been an increase in the number of people caught with 1-2 fish over the daily bag limit. These people are usually dealt with using infringement notices.

Ray stated that he would like to work more closely with this forum to improve fisheries compliance within the region.

Craig encouraged members to inform MFish about problems of alleged offending within their local areas. He reminded members to quickly contact MFish if they see or know of people breaking the fishing rules.

George Zander stated there was a growing compliance problem in Ngawi as the area becomes more popular with visitors. In particular, many people are visiting the area to collect paua, and many are exceeding the daily bag limit (ie, 10 paua per person per day) and taking animals less than the minimum size limit (ie, 125 mm). He asked Ray to place additional compliance signs in the Ngawi area to better inform people about the amateur fishing rules, particularly for paua.

Ray noted that he had problems in getting additional signage within the region because of resource consent issues. George stated he has already had verbal approval from a councillor on the South Wairarapa District Council to place fisheries signs on galvanised poles they have already erected along the coast for their Total Fire Ban signs in the summer. He was told as long as there is room left for the Total Fire Ban signs to be attached at the top of the poles, there shouldn't be any problems to attach an MFish sign. George requested bigger signs at the Lake Ferry turn off and at the Ngawi village itself.

George suggested that signs include photos of various fish and shellfish to improve identification by new New Zealanders. He thought a specific sign about paua would be particularly helpful. Edward Beetham said that a similar sign should also be placed at Castlepoint. Ray said that he will follow up this matter after the meeting to see if he is able to get new compliance signs at Ngawi and Castlepoint.

George asked for MFish's position on filleting fish at sea by charter boats. Craig said that recreational fishers (regardless of whether they are fishing on their own boat or a charter boat) are entitled to fillet fish at sea providing they can prove the fish was above the minimum legal size limit. Leigh said that if the forum considered filleting at sea to be a problem, they are able to forward this issue as part of the next review of the recreational fishing regulations.

James Parahi asked for a phone number to contact the Napier District Compliance Office.

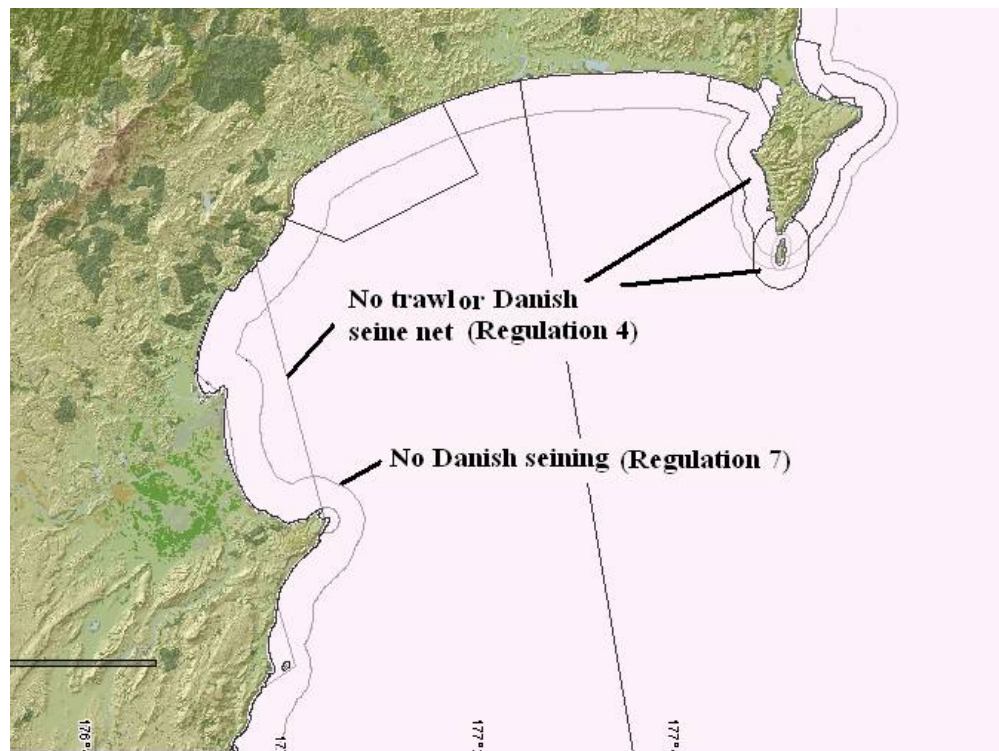
***The Napier District Compliance Office can be contacted at:
Phone Number - 06 835 1065***

Alain Jorion said he was aware there was a problem in areas north of Gisborne with regulation 27 and customary fishing. Craig noted this was not really a problem within Hawke's Bay as customary fishing was now managed under the Fisheries (Kaimoana Customary Fishing) Regulations (and not regulations 27 of the Fisheries (Amateur Fishing) Regulations).

Action 3: Ray to explore whether additional fishing signs can be erected at Ngawi and Castlepoint.

Danish Seining

Paul Creswell reminded the forum that Wayne Bicknell raised concerns at the last meeting about Danish seining within Hawke's Bay. Paul noted he had already sent Wayne a response after the meeting but noted that Danish seining is still prohibited within inshore waters throughout the east coast of the North Island, and including Hawke's Bay. He stated that MFish had not received any proposal to review this closure. Paul provided the forum with a map of the Danish seine restrictions within the Hawke's Bay area (see below). Wayne said he would pass this information on to his fishing club.



Häpuka weights

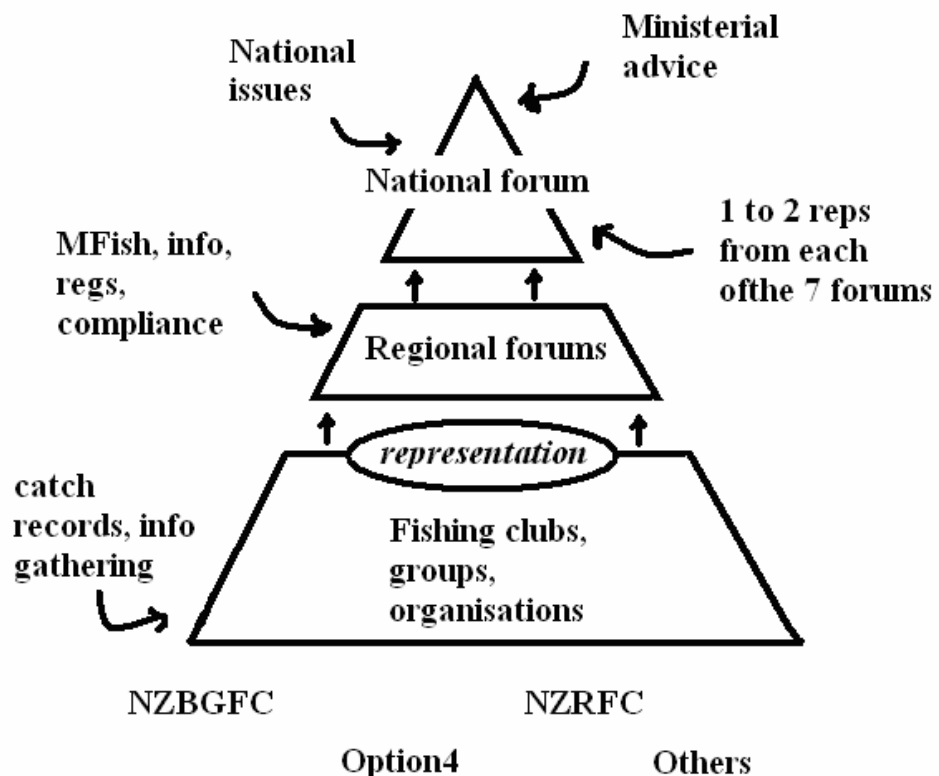
Edward Beetham advised the forum that he had started to collect information to support his concerns about a decline in abundance and size of häpuka in the Wairarapa. He noted he had been recording weights of häpuka caught

by fishers from the Wairarapa and Pukemanu fishing clubs over the past few months and had found that fishers were no longer catching fish over 15 kgs. This information suggested there had been a decline in the large resident fish within the area. He advised that some of the local charter operators had imposed a voluntary limit of 2 hāpuka per person. He asked MFish for advice on how he can progress this issue further.

Leigh Mitchell stated that MFish had developed a draft proposal for inclusion in the October 2007 sustainability round to review the amateur bag limit for the east coast, North Island hāpuka fishery (ie, HPB 2). Unfortunately, it was decided to not progress the proposal until such time as additional information was collected to assess whether a similar problem was occurring within the adjoining HPB 7 and 8 fisheries. This work would be undertaken over the next 12 months. Leigh said she will keep the forum informed as to the progress of this proposal.

National recreational fishing forum

Edward reminded the forum that its submission to the Shared-Fisheries Discussion Document supported the development of a 'national' recreational fishing forum based around the existing seven regional forums. He gave a presentation on how this forum could be developed to represent the large number of recreational fishing clubs and organisations around the country. Edward outlined the following model.



Edward noted this model is consistent with the proposed initiative under the Shared-Fisheries Initiative to establish a Amateur Fishing Trust. The national forum approach would truly represent the recreational sector. Wayne

Bicknell agreed that this model would ensure the Minister is advised by people who represent all recreational interests, and not just those people/groups selected by the Minister.

Leigh Mitchell said Edward's proposed model was already partially provided as funding to hold an annual national forum meeting was already provided for. MFish made a decision to focus on getting the regional forum groups established in year 1 and begin national forum meetings in year 2. The first national forum meeting is planned for later this year (probably October or November).

Leigh suggested the forum could further develop its model and submit it as a proposal to the Shared-Fisheries Project, as well as discussing it at the national meeting. Paul Creswell said Andrew Warmbrunn he will provide more information about the national forum meeting at the next NI-SE meeting.

Action 4: Discuss the national recreational fishing forum meeting at the next meeting.

- Next meeting** The following agenda items are to be carried to the next forum meeting:
- Information on how fishstocks are managed
 - Overview of the local rock lobster fisheries
 - Charter boats and the ITQ system
 - Invite the DCM from the Gisborne District Compliance office to discuss local compliance issues
 - National recreational fishing forum meeting.

Closing Meeting closed at 3pm
