

STOCK STRATEGIES - A SUMMARY

Introduction

Stock Strategies represent the next step in the evolution of fisheries management in New Zealand.

Through Stock Strategies, the short, medium and long-term goals for each fishery will be clearly spelled out, along with a plan to achieve them.

The move will ensure the future sustainability of our fisheries, based on solid information about the state of each fish stock. It will allow all stakeholders to have an understanding of the way fisheries are managed, and will make fisheries management more transparent and accountable.

The Ministry of Fisheries – kaitiaki of our fisheries – is developing the concept of stock strategies and fish plans. It's a complex undertaking, with many of the details still to be developed following consultation with stakeholders.

In this document, we explain the ideas behind the new approach, and outline the content, process and timetable for developing stock strategies.

We are seeking your comments on the way in which stock strategies and fish plans will be developed and managed. We are not, at this stage, looking for comments on specific stocks. There will be plenty of opportunity for input once the Ministry starts developing specific stock strategies.

A new way of doing things

The goal for New Zealand fisheries is to:

“maximise the value New Zealanders obtain through the sustainable use of fisheries resources and protection of the aquatic environment.”

The proposed approach will:

- Clarify Government and stakeholder roles and responsibilities for sustainability and utilisation of fisheries resources.
- Move to objectives-based fisheries management underpinned by the assessment and management of risk.
- Increase transparency by detailing management initiatives provided to each fishery, and their costs.
- Ensure regulatory interventions are justified, and remove those no longer required.
- Monitor performance of management against objectives.

The Ministry proposes to contribute to the goal of maximising value through the creation of **stock strategies**. Stakeholders will be able to contribute to the goal for New Zealand fisheries through **fisheries plans**. The attached consultation document is asking for your views on this proposed approach.

Stock strategies will clearly state the Government objectives for a fishery, analyse risk, and describe the tools and services that the Ministry of Fisheries will provide to each fishery. A fishery plan will be developed by stakeholders, and set out their objectives and contributions for a fishery.

What will a stock strategy look like?

Stock strategies will be prepared in two parts – the stock analysis and the stock operational plan.

The **stock analysis** will outline:

1. **Objectives** – what do we want to achieve in this fishery? These will include ensuring that the fishery is sustainable, and ensuring that people are enabled to provide for their well-being.
2. **Information** – biological, economic, social, cultural and managerial. In the past, decisions have been largely informed by stock assessments, but we know that there is a lot of other information that could inform management.
3. **Risk** – what will happen if we don't meet the objectives? In an ideal world, how would we meet the objectives?

The **stock operation plan** will include:

1. A description of the objectives for the fishery.
2. A detailed plan of the way in which the fishery will be managed (including tools such as catch limits), and the cost.

How will a stock strategy be developed?

There are many types of fisheries in New Zealand, ranging from a single fish species with a large commercial use (such as southern blue whiting), to complex fisheries made up of many species and with many competing demands (the inshore Auckland fishery, known as the North-east North Island mixed finfish fishery, is an example).

There are several ways of grouping fish into stock strategies. The Ministry has suggested a list of 35 stocks which we believe follow logical boundaries, such as fishing methods, geography, biological factors, and the way in which people use the fish, but we would like to hear your views on this:

Southern blue whiting
Orange roughy complex
Deep-water long-lining (ling)

Hoki complex
Squid
Northern flatfish, grey mullet, rig and

Southland mixed finfish	school shark
East Coast North Island mixed finfish	Challenger mixed finfish
North-east North Island mixed finfish	West Coast North Island mixed finfish
Tuna (long-line species)	Kermadec complex
Tuna (trolling)	Tuna (purse seine)
Rock lobster (crayfish)	Mackerels
Blue cod	Paua
Kahawai	Eels
Oysters	Scallops
Shellfish (dredged)	Shellfish (hand-gathered)
Freshwater	Potting/ shellfish trawl bycatch
Kingfish	Bluenose and associated species
Set-net butterfly/moki/wrasse	Scampi
Kina	Deep-water crabs
Inshore pelagic	Seaweed

Once a stock is identified, the Government will identify what legal requirements it must meet in regard to this fishery.

It will then (with input from the public and stakeholders) analyse the different demands being made on the fishery, and the different ways in which people want to use the fishery. In some cases, commercial fishers will be the only users; in others, there will be many different types of users. Stock strategies will be flexible enough to encompass different groups' uses of our fishery resources.

Information needed to carry out the risk assessment will be collected.

The risk assessment is used to identify the best way to meet the objectives for the stock. For example, what management actions will best ensure the sustainability of the fish stock? The government has many options in choosing how to ensure its objectives are met. To help guide us, we will take several factors into account:

1. Giving maximum discretion and flexibility for rights' holders to operate within the management objectives.
2. Encouraging voluntary compliance with the management system, which means that they need to be widely supported.
3. Cost effectiveness of the proposed methods. Where cost constraints mean that methods are chosen which in some way limit stakeholders' use of the fishery, they might consider developing their own fish plans which meet the stock strategy's objectives, but give them greater use of the fishery.

Stock strategies will not be set in stone. We know that they will evolve as the fisheries change. Therefore, ongoing evaluation and monitoring will be an important part of the stock strategy.

Where do we start?

The Ministry proposes starting with five stock strategies to test the proposed system. We've chosen five fisheries:

1. Southern blue whiting complex;
2. Paua;
3. Hoki complex (including bycatch);
4. Orange roughy complex (including the oreos, cardinal fish, alfonsino, and bycatch of bluenose, rubyfish and ribaldo); and
5. A multi-species shared fishery with multiple stocks and environmental impacts (the specific fishery has not yet been determined).

Between them, these five fisheries will likely address many of the management issues that we are likely to face in stock strategies, including a single-species commercial fishery; competing commercial, customary and recreational demands; bycatch; and environmental impacts.

We plan to have these first five stock strategies ready by August 2005.

How can you be involved?

The Ministry of Fisheries believes in robust consultation, and is committed to giving due consideration to all issues raised. This is especially important to meet the Crown's Treaty of Waitangi obligations.

We are looking for comment on the overall approach being taken to stock strategies and fish plans, including:

- The proposed framework for stock strategies and fisheries plans.
- Appropriate methods and times for consultation.
- The way in which fisheries are grouped into stock strategies.
- The content of the draft southern blue whiting risk assessment.

The Ministry welcomes your submissions, and recommends that you read the enclosed Stock Strategies Consultation Document. Copies are also available from the Ministry and on its website (www.fish.govt.nz).

Once the stock strategy framework is finalised, we will ask for input on the development of specific stock strategies.

How to make a submission

Written comments from stakeholders are requested by Monday, 21 February 2005. Ministry staff will be available for discussions with stakeholders. Please contact Brian Ashton at ashtonb@fish.govt.nz.