

Hokianga Accord article for the Mangawhai Focus community newspaper, serving the area from Bream Bay to Warkworth and the Kaipara regions.

Marine degradation catalyst for fisheries alliance

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A lack of fish and concerns about a degrading marine environment are the catalysts for mid north Maori merging with several interest groups to halt the decline.

Ngapuhi, Ngati Whatua, other iwi and hapu are due to meet with fishing and environmental advocates during the next Hokianga Accord meeting in Ruawai. The Naumai marae hui, on April 22 and 23, will be the fourteenth meeting of the Accord, the mid north regional iwi fisheries forum.

Ministry of Fisheries' officials will be presenting early on Thursday, leaving the remaining time available to iwi, Greenpeace, Forest & Bird, NZ Sport Fishing and option4 representatives to discuss ways to best achieve "more fish in the water".

This unlikely alliance of commercial, non-commercial fishing and environmental groups has developed over 15 joint submissions in response to proposals from the fisheries Ministry and Department of Conservation, in the past five years.

A hot topic at the Naumai meeting will be the environmental impacts of installing underwater, power-generating turbines at the Kaipara Harbour entrance.

Management of coastal areas by local communities and implementation of customary area management tools are regular discussion points. The Accord's ultimate aim is to have the public enjoying access to healthy, abundant fisheries that exist in a diverse, clean marine environment.

People with an interest in fisheries and environmental issues are welcome to attend and participate in the two-day discussion. For more details visit www.HokiangaAccord.co.nz call Shelley Naera on 0275 872466 or Trish Rea on 0274 175121.