

# SECURING A FISHING FUTURE

## Record of the meeting

Held Friday 26 March 2010 at the Buckland's Yacht Club

10.00 am - 4.00pm

### Welcome

Keith Ingram welcomed all those gathered and introduced the facilitator Doug Kidd. Doug warmly acknowledged those who were around when he was Minister of Fisheries. He spoke of his independent status and mentioned that MFish had paid his airfare to Auckland as they too would like to see one united recreational body. He raised the Guardians of Fiordland as an example of what a community could achieve for fisheries and the marine environment by working together. In the end it's the numbers of people speaking together that count so lets open our minds to what we might learn.

### Introductions (Alan Key, Nelson Cross and Laurel Teirney)

Alan Key spoke of how he became involved in advocating for recreational fishers. Experience with the Hector's Dolphin issue when it first surfaced caused fishers to look around the country to see what successes other recreational organisations were having and found there wasn't a lot.

John Bertrum, a professional motivator from Australia, spoke to Alan saying that NZ had the brains and the cunning but we just needed the funding. Alan asked the participants to look at the positives of this presentation so we can find a way forward for recreational fishers.

Laurel Teirney doesn't fish but has worked with recreational fishers for more than 20 years, 10 of which were with MFish. When she arrived in Dunedin no one body represented recreational fishers so she organised the south of the South Island forum. Over the past decade several different government initiatives have seen recreational fishers fall behind others in the fishery. If something is not done now recreational fishers will continue to lose status and a place in fishery decisions

Nelson Cross thanked Bucklands Yacht Club and the New Zealand Recreational Fishing Council for the venue and the lunches. He thanked the clubs for their donations that helped us get this show on the road.

Those present were asked to introduce themselves and identify the organisation they represent:

Geoff Rowling NZRFC, Sheryl Hart NZRFC, Keith Ingram NZRFC, Derrick Paull NZRFC/ACA, Ross Gilden NZRFC, Ted Howard NZRFC, George Zander NZRFC, Shona Zander Observer, Graeme Dawber ACA, David Beattie NZTB, Don Glass NZTB, Peter Crabb NZUW, Grant Leighton NZUW, Bob Rosemergy SNZ, Brent Rolston ACA, Scott Tindale ACA, Trish Rae ODRC,

Jason Foord ODRC, Kim Walshe Consultant, Bob Meikle SI Rec Forum, Grant Dixon NZ Fishing Magazine, Garry Ottmann G & F, Bryce Johnson F & G, Presenters Alan Key, Nelson Cross and Laurel Teirney, Facilitator Hon Doug Kidd

Apologies: New Zealand Sport Industry

### **Power Point Presentation**

Nelson Cross presented a proposal to raise the status and effectiveness of the amateur marine fishing sector.

#### **We are here because:**

- The recreational fishing sector has a limited effect at Government level
- Representation is fragmented
- There are constant funding problems
- Dedicated individuals become overwhelmed by the demands of advocacy and effective representation
- The recreational fishing sector is losing important issues and status.

#### **Where have we come from?**

An initial meeting took place with southern fishers in Dunedin (May 2009) that was in part triggered by the Ministry of Fisheries restructuring and the implied fisheries disengagement with recreational stakeholders. We were then invited to speak at the NZRFC AGM (July 2009). From this meeting we were challenged to show the proposal was practical and given three months to report back to parties involved. A progress report was presented to southern fishers, NZRFC members and other interested groups in Christchurch (October 2009). This meeting resolved that a presentation be made to all national organisations involved in marine recreational fishing in Auckland (March 2010). Auckland was chosen because of the fishing organizations based there, for the ease and costs of those flying in and the possibility of a free venue.

#### **What's happened over the past two decades?**

In 1990 the government managed and funded marine recreational fisheries. We were top of the heap or at least "first among equals" being Recreational, Commercial and Customary Maori.

The harsh reality in 2010 is the recreational fishing sector is "under-managed and under-funded" by Government. Commercial and customary Maori are top of the heap and recreational have found themselves at the bottom.

#### **How did this happen?**

Commercial and Maori got organized and together with the Government moved themselves to the top.

For commercial:

- The QMS was introduced to manage commercial fishing
- Commercial representative stakeholder companies have been set up for most commercial fisheries
- The QMS is administered by the commercial sector
- The Ministry now co-manages some fisheries with the commercial sector

For Maori:

- Treaty settlements moved Maori into the business of commercial fishing
- Customary fishing regulations were introduced for tangata whenua to manage customary fishing
- Taiapure and Mataitai were introduced to involve tangata whenua in managing fisheries in significant local areas

### **What have been the costs to recreational fishers?**

We have all seen the headlines:

- Kahawai fund needs more money – please donate
- Minister concerned over “fragmented” representation
- Set netting banned from nearly all coastal fisheries areas
- As there is inadequate data regarding the recreational catch.....
- Forest and Bird propose huge marine reserve

The list goes on.....

### **What about the overall costs?**

The lack of representation has come at a cost.

There has been a cumulative loss of:

- Fishing areas
- Catch - bag limit reductions/increased size limits
- Fishing methods that interact with marine mammals
- Input into fisheries management decisions has been compromised by:
  - No one representative body/inability to get organized
  - No funding
  - Inability to participate in processes, research, harvest, allocation, management, monitoring
  - Inadequate data about recreational fishers and fishing

And all this adds up to a reduction in the status of recreational fishers and credibility with the politicians.

Recreational fishers have become the poor relations or Cinderella in current fisheries management. The experience of one recreational fisher who has devoted his life to seeking the truth behind decisions that banned fishing methods and removed fishing opportunities from the recreational sector was shared with participants.

**Bob's story** about his experience representing amateur set net fishing is disturbing and has been included in Appendix 1 to cover the details adequately.

### **Where does MFish and the government stand?**

Over the past year MFish and the government have restructured the Ministry and are moving on the principles in their 2030 Vision. Both of these initiatives involve fewer resources for working with the recreational fishing sector and for consulting over fisheries management issues and decision making throughout the regions. These policies indicate that the Government does not hold the recreational sector very highly, especially as they are working with both commercial and customary Maori to strengthen their respective roles in the fishery.

### **What can we do about it?**

#### **GET ORGANISED**

We need:

- One integrated body representing the interests of all marine recreational fishers – recognised and mandated by government.
- The body to operate effectively for fishers at all levels from the grass roots to regional and national levels.
- All fishers to be identified so that information and feedback for robust fisheries decisions in research planning, management, monitoring and compliance can be provided.
- Sufficient and reliable funding for the body to function, canvass views and advocate for recreational fishing interest within the sector, with the agencies, government and other organisations.

### **What will motivate and unify?**

A shared vision or goal:

*“To facilitate the provision of professional, full-time advocacy furthering and protecting the rights, aspirations and ability of recreational fishers to access a fair and sustainable share of “available fish in the water” at the highest levels of decision making re policy and regulation. Also, to promote the involvement of recreational fishers in the management of their fishery, including representation at forums involving Maori and other stakeholders.”*

#### **A brief look at similar organisations.**

There are several organisations with similar advocacy roles and structures - they are:

- Fish and Game New Zealand
- Forest and Bird
- Federated Farmers of New Zealand
- World Wildlife Fund
- Green peace
- Forest and Game

Of these organisations, only Fish and Game has statutory recognition while the rest, excluding Federated Farmers, rely on voluntary membership and donations.

What features do they have in common?

- One representative body mandated by the wider group.
- Regional and national structure.
- Effective communication up and down from every level.
- All members identified, flow of information, opportunity to be actively involved.
- Sufficient and reliable funding.

### **What are we proposing?**

- A representative governing body elected by the fishers.
- This "body" to be responsible for the appointment and management of a professional advocacy group tasked with presenting and advancing all fishing matters and interests relevant to recreational fishing.
- This professional group to be the recognised advocate for recreational fishing concerns and initiatives from around the country.
- Actively encourage existing groups to provide the current levels of input into fisheries management through the unified body.
- Ensure that these concerns are advanced to the relevant minister/agencies fairly and forcefully.
- Liaise with all recreational fishing groups, regional and national forums and provide a conduit for all fishers to have their concerns addressed.
- Conduct dialogue with all other stakeholders.
- The creation of a reliable database of recreational fishers.

### **The benefits of fisher identification**

- Communications to, from and between recreational fishers will be possible for the first time.
- Fishers can be kept informed about their organization, about issues and developments at the local, regional and national levels and about agency and political initiatives and those of other relevant organisations.
- Fishers can be canvassed and provide their views about proposals and issues.
- Fishers can feed information about their fishing areas, methods, species and harvest into a database that will allow the organisation to effectively advocate for recreational fisheries in the range of research and management processes conducted by government regionally and nationally.
- Such a database will be enormously valuable for all aspects of managing and monitoring recreational fisheries over time.

### **So, just how many recreational fishers are there?**

A number of figures have been bandied about - maybe 100,000, could be as high as 1,500 000, but then what about 800,000 or perhaps 600,000. The fact is nobody really knows.

## **Adequate, ongoing and secure funding**

Adequate, secure and ongoing funding is not only required to support the proposed organisation and enable it to achieve its objectives but also to maximize the benefits and opportunities for all recreational fishers. The level of funding for the task is not insignificant.

Among the list of priorities establishing a database of recreational fishers and fishing activity is currently regarded as a top priority because we have nothing that accurately indicates recreational activity and catch. A database will provide enormous leverage in TAC setting and negotiations about allocations and provide very valuable information to government and the agencies as well as giving fishers the opportunity to play a fundamental role in contributing to the database themselves.

At this stage Nelson introduced us to a novel little creature called "Bluey the Cod" who stayed with us through the funding section making appropriate comments along the way!

## **Funding sources**

The following possibilities have been considered and evaluated:

- Targeted Sales Tax
- Free Membership
- Dedicated Fuel Tax
- Marine Industry Levy
- Government/ funding
- Self Funding

The pros and cons of each of these possibilities were identified and recorded.

<b>1. Targeted Sales Tax</b>	The pros	Sufficient ongoing income if "ring fenced" No direct financial impact on recreational fishers
	The cons	Already allocated Require legislation and be a cost to government Other groups would be interested i.e Coastguard There would be a degree of separation difficulty No Database

<b>2. Free membership</b>	The pros	No cost to fishers Benefits to members – purchasing power Voluntary membership Provide limited database
	The Cons	Limited database Uptake? Both from fishers and advertisers Continued high cost of regular funding Funding uncertainty

Derrick Paull who had investigated the free membership idea spoke about the benefits. Free membership actually relies on charging retailers and others for the opportunity to get their marketing information to recreational fishers. 'Sales' in general are significantly easier to make when an item is 'free' versus cheap or at any price. Uptake is about 6 times greater at \$0.00 than at \$0.05c - even though the cost is negligible, if it's free - they want it.

By offering a free (even if compulsory) membership there is unlikely to be the level of resistance from the end user (i.e. fishers) than if there is any cost associated.

The value of 'free' membership comes from selling access to recreational fishers to organisations or companies that want to reach them. Members details are not given to anyone else, but we pass on the advertiser's message to them via e-mail, post or website. Essentially it is database marketing to a very specific, captive market. The members' identity is not disclosed, but they will receive information on brands or campaigns (including from MFish & DOC I imagine) in return for their 'free' membership or licence....

If 250,000 people were to 'join', the value of the database could be up to \$80,000 per month in advertising revenue. Currently the government is the only organisation with such large databases and theirs are not for sale. Also, there is no one in the fishing industry with this kind of reach.

**3. Dedicated Fuel Tax** The pros Would provide sufficient ongoing funding if "ring fenced"  
No financial impact on recreational fishers.  
The cons Some fuel tax is already allocated  
Could open the door to other groups  
Difficulty in separation from farm, commercial etc.  
Costly to administer  
Would require legislation

**4. Marine Industry Levy** The pros Would provide sufficient income  
Would be easy to target marine industries  
The cons Difficult to administer unless NO exemptions  
Levy would simply be passed onto consumers  
Administrative costs would impact on the marine retail sector.  
Other groups would demand the same.

**5. Government or Agency Funding**  
Not in the short, medium or long-term horizon is the above seen as a permanent long-term option. Although some one-off funding could be found to initial set-up may be available. Any long term government funding will come with conditions.

**6. Self Funding** The Pros Adequate ongoing and secure funding  
Simple to implement  
Exemptions decided by the body  
Politically acceptable if initiative is from fisher themselves  
Minimal cost to government

	Fee kept to around 20-30 dollars
	Excellent database through "Smart" card membership system
The Cons	Does have an impact financially, albeit small, on fishers
	An entrenched aversion by some to self funding
	Will require legislation
	Associated administration costs
	Possible lack of compliance

Nelson went on to compare the cost of a \$20-30 membership fee with a number of purchases that as fishers we take for granted such as 3 fishing mags, 5 hamburgers, 1/2 tank of gas etc.

### **What a Membership /Smart Card could do for the recreational fishing sector**

The membership card is the key to fisher identification. Electronic features will enable a range of functions to be carried out that have not been possible before such as sending information, receiving feedback, collecting data etc.

- Every fisher would be issued with a membership card containing identification details.
- The card would be the cornerstone of creating a comprehensive fisher database.
- All data will be owned by the unified body.
- The card can also be used for monitoring and research on a local, regional and national basis.
- Other groups could have access to the data through password encryption.
- The card could also be a discount card and therefore has the potential to be at no cost through normal purchasing over a year.

### **How the Membership/Smart card could work**

- The fisher purchases a membership card.
- The card has a bar code which identifies the fisher.
- Various people (from the rec sector) will have what are called readers that can be taken into the field for use.
- Information from individual members (including their membership details and details about catch or observations etc) can be recorded onto the reader and uploaded to a PC that is protected by a secure link.
- The uses of such a card for collecting data, conducting research and monitoring are numerous and are being documented.
- The unified "body" can then make selected data available to chosen recipients via a secure website.

### **How the discount system works**

- Fishers get discounts at participating retailers when the card is swiped through an EFTPOS terminal.



- With the agreement of the unified "body" reports on fishers' purchasing behaviour could be issued to respective parties at a cost. The benefits identified under free membership apply equally to the membership card.

### **Who we have approached about the concept?**

- Possible mentors have been approached (eg. Gareth Morgan).
- George Benwell, Dean of the Business School Otago University has assigned a student to compile a business model for the proposal.
- Meeting with Environment Southland that is supportive.
- Meeting with Finance Minister and Deputy PM Bill English who is interested in keeping up with developments.
- Approach to "Smart" card suppliers who have evaluated the details of the proposal and consider the smart card a practical solution. They also attended the 17 March Dunedin meeting to better assess fishers' needs.
- Sonya McGill of ECARDZ Rangiora (ongoing communications)
- Peter Neil of Red Crater Software Solutions
- Meeting with Eric Roy MP Southland who is supportive.
- Approach to Video NZ and SIT regarding DVD production. They have given thought to a DVD that would be most effective at getting the message across.
- Initial contact with Ngai Tahu.

### **Recreational fishers' mandate and rights .... an ideal solution!**

Laurel Teirney spoke on recreational fishers' mandate and rights, pointing out that an issue of this nature cannot be resolved over night. Time and also a groundswell of support are fundamental to making progress.

What we're talking about here is an ideal solution - something to work towards - we have a package made up of a number of components, some of which need to be in statute for the whole package to work.

The most effective way of securing a mandate and rights for the recreational (amateur) fishing sector is through legislation. Let's just imagine what an amendment to the Fisheries Act might look like.

Legislation would need to include the following components:

- Purpose of the Amendment (recognition of the amateur sector).
- Establish one integrated representative organisation (recreational fishing mandate).
- Identify functions and responsibilities of the representative body and the sector (a way to define recreational fishing rights).
- The structure and how it would operate.
- The means of identifying all recreational fishers so that the flow of information and views would be facilitated.
- A means of accessing adequate, secure and ongoing funding. From the fishers for the fishers and the fisheries.

Laurel then spoke about the advantages the concept would bring to both amateur fishers and to the Government. These are very significant and in the longer term would see a strong amateur fishing sector taking its place alongside the commercial sector and customary Maori once more.

**The outcome: a Win - Win Approach**

<b>Amateur fishers</b>	<b>Government /agencies/other groups</b>
1. One integrated organization	Know who to talk and listen to
2. All fishers identified and support canvassed	A clear mandate from the huge number of amateur fishers
3. Governing "body" elected	Confidence that the "body" is representative
4. Negotiates amateur fishing rights	Able to negotiate rights with representative "body"
5. Professionals advocate and negotiate on behalf of the sector	The team has expertise, time and resources to participate in all processes
6. Open communication fundamental to the organization	Assured that members' views will inform the representatives
7. Fisher informed data base	Amateur fishing data - an upgraded component of research, management and monitoring
8. Adequate, ongoing and secure funding from members fees	Dealing with a reliable/credible organisation

**Trust and confidence develops both ways**

**FISHERIES BENEFIT**

**Where to from here?**

The following ideas could well be reviewed in light of the experience we encounter at each step.

This is clearly an ideal scenario.

- Presentation to Government/Ministry of Fisheries - sponsorship sought for canvassing wider support.
- Creation of a DVD presentation including expert commentary and opinion.
- NZ wide road show using the DVD to canvass fishers' support and opinion (mandate).
- Present mandate to government and all political parties.

- Lots of work.....
- Lots more work.....
- Formation of an integrated body!

Doug Kidd thanked Nelson Cross for his presentation and took a statement from Kim Walshe about IT technology which has come a long way. Doug's commented that the influence of an organisation of up to 1 million people will attract all manner of companies with the latest technology. Anything might be possible over the next few years.

### **Gary Ottman - Game and Forrest**

Gary spoke about the formation of Game and Forrest and the Big Game Council that is about to be put in statute. The process started in 1998 when all organisations involved in big game hunting (hunters and commercial operators) got together to oppose the mass culling of Bull Thar in the South Island. Because of the value of New Zealand hunting to overseas visitors international funding was provided for five years.

He suggested that the recreational fishing sector needs to be clear about what is needed and have a plan about how to get there. Most importantly there should be no internal fighting. Every opportunity must be taken to make you enemies your friends. Guaranteed initial funding is most important because it gives you breathing space to get the message out there. If people think they can outspend or out last you they will. Gary wished the group luck with the future.

### **Bryce Johnson - Fish and Game**

Bryce outlined the Fish and Game model. Everyone pays a license to fish for introduced species such as trout and salmon. Those interested in the management of the system make themselves available to take on management positions. So user management is possible and the end users manage their own affairs. This is enshrined in an Act of Parliament. There are 12 regions around New Zealand and they manage and enhance fisheries within their regions and feed through to an elected national board, that manages national issues. There are 65 staff in the regions and 5 staff are employed at the national office. Fish and Game has a 97% compliance rate with licensing because anglers and hunters feel they are making a contribution to their hunting and fishing experience. Most don't consider it to be a license as such. Fish and Game has an \$8 million annual income with staff being a biggest resource. They are making a very significant contribution to habitat protection, and take the view that if the habitat is healthy so too will be the fish. Apart from local initiatives such as tree planting and protection of swamps, Fish and Game have been involved in tenure revue and instrumental in protecting rivers through Water Conservation Orders. And the high profile nationally recognised "Dirty Dairying" programme is something that marine fishers are also benefiting from. Bryce's job is to maximise utilisation through sustainable methods i.e. Bag limit, season closures and seeding lakes with juveniles etc.

Fish and Game are a public entity not a crown entity whose role and right is to advise the government. Advice for us is we need our own funding source and then we will be empowered by the principle of "users pays, user says". Presently no one knows who's in charge of marine recreational fishers.

And step away from involvement in treaty issues, they are issues between Iwi and the crown.

### **Feedback from participants**

Jason Forrd, representing CORANZ informed the meeting that and they were opposed to licensing. Licenses would suffer a ratchet effect over time and he would not be happy to pay. Amateur fishers fished to feed themselves and their families. There were many families especially in Northland who could not afford to pay a license fee. Jason also spoke of the Common law right to go fishing. Doug Kidd informed him that the common law right went with the 1908 fisheries Act and was addressed in the Kahawai legal challenge decision papers. A statutory right to fish now exists.

Keith Ingram pointed out that the meeting needed to focus on the structure not the funding issue and these needed to be kept separate or we were risking ongoing talks. Government needs a single recreational fishers' entity that they can talk to, receive information from and take into account in decision making. He personally is opposed to licensing and until Maori can be convinced to pay a license to fish for food to feed the families then any conversation about licensing was a waste of time.

Sheryl Hart said that some time ago the Raglan Sport Fishing Club talked at an AGM about licensing and no one was opposed. It would be interesting to see the discussion take place again.

Alan Key said that the Guardians of Fiordland carried out information gathering first and on the basis of that won a \$300,000 grant over three years from the Ministry for the Environment. This seed funding saw the development of the management strategy. He also noted that the Fiordland model is local and we need an overarching body for national decisions and regional organisations to feed into.

Doug Kidd said that SPARC funding is for sport and recreational and should be utilised.

NZ Spear fishing supports an overarching body. They don't have fees and only charge at competitions. They want a representative body that can address issues - something they can offer to their members.

Don Glass was opposed to allowing compliance access to the information on the smart card. This resulted in a debate on the uses of smart cards. There was agreement that information needed to be secure and people needed to be able to trust the system.

Graeme Dawber from ACA said that the letter from NZSFC acknowledged that the NZRFC were formed to represent the amateur fishers and are the overarching national representative body and they were happy with that.

Alan Key asked what participants' views were about the NZRFC. He highlighted the fact that recreational fishers' need a body that can meet all the requirements we presented. Most were comfortable that the NZRFC could become that "body" but this is not the reality at present. There has to be one body.

Geoff Rowling pointed out that discussions are at a very early stage and the issue now is not who should do it, but rather that it needs to be done. No government is going to initiate licensing - this is about self-funding. We need to be proactive and not marginalized as we are now. Currently no organization is able to do the job. Even if NZSFC doubles their membership to at best 5% of the population who fish this leaves a lot of anglers unaccounted for. Why should the 5% be expected to stump up with the money for the other 95%? The NZSFC are doing a good job with their Hiwi the Kiwi initiative but it's not enough.

Geoff confirmed that "no licensing of recreational fishers" is still NZRFC policy. Many people are opposed to paying a license to the government, but they may not be so averse to paying a fee to their own organisation that is protecting their interests.

He continued with the fact that we need secure funding if recreational fishers are going to be a successful and effective group. If Scott Macindoe wants to write out a cheque every month that's good but it will still not be enough to address all the issues. Until we are organised the government will always create obstacles than we cannot afford to deal with. Section 10 of the Fisheries Act was a prime example of very good lobbying by the commercial sector that base themselves in Wellington for this very reason. The change in the Act was to give the Minister more power in taking a more precautionary approach to fisheries management. This proposal never saw the light of day because of successful lobbying of commercial interests. We need set up funding to make progress towards establishing an independent source of funding.

George Zander NZRFC board member said the public needs to own this for it to go forward.

Scott Tinsdale ACA confirmed that we need a list of all recreational fishers. This will have huge pulling power both with government and as a selling point.

Laurel Tierney said that any cost would not be a license fee for the government, but a membership fee for the recreational fishing organisation.

Derrick Paul said that individual membership should have equal status verses a club situation ie one person - one vote.

Bryce Johnson said Fish and Game have been around for a long time and they have found that the political animals put themselves forward for the board etc. Their clubs tend to be more social and focus on fishing tournaments and events. He reiterated that people have to agree with the principles and the proposal had to have value for the fishers. We need to deliver a means to an end - always remember the end result. This will be about individual members and finding solutions. This will enhance national organisations by allowing them to get on and do what they do best. For instance, an overarching body would have been able to take action about the Hector/Maui Dolphin issues.

Peter Crabb, stated that NZUW represents divers whether they like it or not. They have very few actual members and the Association has to find other methods of funding. For instance, 0800 divers emergency number is an example along with Padi diving school training that they conduct around the country. He thinks having technology that can access the people will come with real benefits.

Nelson Cross raised a number of points relevant to the discussion.  
The regional forums could step up to the mark because they are at a regional level and, in the south members are representative because they have been elected by their clubs.  
An overarching body will enhance the work of the clubs.  
The NZRFC has a long history of success but clubs no longer have a growing membership.  
The large clubs are made up of a growing social membership - these people are not serious fishers. We have to be able to sell something and funding is the issue.  
We all want a sustainable fishery for all New Zealanders.  
Maori have said that they will come and talk to us when we have something to talk about.  
We will have our detractors such as those who think if you want to make change you need to be on the inside.  
Soundings and Shared Fisheries were lost opportunities.  
Focus on the issues that unite not the ones that divide you.  
We must have advocacy in Wellington to be successful. The paper by Kim Walshe and Derrick Paull also highlighted the need for an independent presence in Wellington. Their document and ours share many similarities.  
None of the three of us have an allegiance to fishers' organizations. That puts us in an independent position that could be helpful when talking to organisations and clubs more widely.  
The next critical step is taking this concept to Wellington and meeting with politicians to seek support and seed funding for canvassing fishers' views more widely. To do that we need to tick every box - do you support this next step?

NZUA, NZMTA and NZACA endorsed moves as outlined above. Don Glass agreed with the principle however he pointed out that he was there representing an organisation and as such needed to report back with the relevant information before support or non support could be given. This was acknowledged by Alan Key and he commented that this is only the third time this presentation has been presented. After each presentation significant improvements have been made from the feedback received and the same would be true for today's presentation. Don Glass also commented on the use of the "Smart" card as an aid to compliance and suggested this is not a good idea – a thought that was generally supported by participants

ACA commented that they had been told by SPARC that fishing is not a sport. They have acquired documents that show some discrepancies in how SPARC made these decisions. But if we demonstrated the incentives for Government in this proposal seed funding would be forthcoming.

### **Where to from here?**

Alan Key suggested that as representatives of various organizations, participants need to distribute this information to members and return to discuss this in light of the feedback received. It was agreed that participants go back to their constituents and return with their input within 30 days. In order to take this initiative further we need to speak with the relevant politicians to gauge their level of support. Given the short timeframes to work in because of the three yearly parliamentary term the initiative needs to be before all political parties by the end of this year.

Doug Kidd advised that the concept had to be sold to get some seed funding. For this you need a basic plan such as something for fishers i.e. some recreational only areas. However everyone wants his or her own area. With one overarching body/ structure would mean that the best policy and places would be chosen. This body would also deal with the land based effects as happened in Tasman Bay with the Scallops and the demise of sea grass which effects the survival of juvenile fish. This body should be looking at these problems. There are things to do and who will do that best. It's an overarching body.

## Summary

General agreement was expressed for four basic principles:

1. The need for one integrated body for marine recreational fishers
2. The need for an adequate, ongoing and secure source of funding
3. The integrated body be based on individual membership
4. The structure includes a presence in the regions and in Wellington

Most participants felt that more consultation was needed from within their groups. However the participants generally saw no harm in the group taking the presentation to the Minister or Ministry to see if there was any support for the principles being advocated. Nelson Cross stated that if nothing else we have stimulated people into thinking about an entrenched problem facing the recreational fishing sector.

Kim Walshe thanked Doug for being here and stated that he agreed with some principles as identified, however he had notes on more than a dozen points he thought needed more work. He also felt that the exclusion of Ngapuhi and Ngati Whatua would likely lead to the proposal being undermined.

Note: This was a meeting with national organisations to test the waters about the concept. We planned for a similar presentation to Iwi but needed to consult first to find what would be the most appropriate way to handle this.

Keith Ingram asked that we concentrate on the structure and leave the funding issue as an aside. He also stated that Maori fishing interests were well represented in political and fisheries management circles and that they already have their own views and will bring them to the table when they are ready.

Alan Key asked representative to provide opinions and changes they would like to see in the presentation. Geoff Rowling suggested 30 days.

Doug Kidd stated that Wellington is a place you must be.

Geoff thanked the Southern team for coming, and Doug Kidd for his job as facilitator. Opinion leaders present now need to act responsibly in how we go forward.

Meeting closed at 4.02 pm

This meeting record was compiled by Sheryl Hart

## **Appendix 1**

### **Bob's story**

Bob Meikle, currently Vice-President of the Akaroa Harbour Recreational Fishing Club (Inc) having been President for all but 2 years since its inception in 1993, spoke about the issues surrounding the implementation of the recent Hector's dolphins set net ban announced at the end of May 2009 by then Minister of Fisheries, Mr J Anderton.

Bob sat on the Hector's/Maui dolphin Threat Management Advisory Group that developed the Hector's and Maui Dolphin Threat Management consultative document. He was told that he was not there to represent recreational fishers but only for his knowledge on set netting. Bob reported that it was the most devious and manipulative process he had ever been involved in.

He had been in possession of the records of all known dolphin deaths from 1921 to 1988. From 1988 until the time of the first meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 2005 the record of incidents could be accepted as being reasonably accurate. At the first meeting of the Advisory Group Bob suggested that a good starting point would be for all members of the group to be supplied with a copy of that list. Circulation was delayed and when released there had been a large number of alterations made to it compared with the original that Bob had a copy of.

Liz. Slooten and Steve Dawson, students at Otago University did their study thesis on Hector's dolphins and subsequently, on qualifying in Marine Science became advocates for Hector's Dolphins protection, Their studies were based around the 1984 – 88 period including interviews with both recreational and commercial fishers as to their historical interaction with dolphins around Banks Peninsula. This resulted in a figure of about 275 dolphin deaths in this period. This figure was checked for accuracy by DOC and MFish who formed the opinion that numbers were excessive and they came up with a figure of about 94.

Whatever the true figure was it resulted in the establishment of the Banks Peninsula Marine Mammal Sanctuary in 1989 even though recreational fishers tried to tell both government departments involved that the sanctuary was being put in the wrong place; it should have been on the beaches north of Christchurch where poor set netting practices were taking place.

Bob identified short comings in the process of developing and implementing the Hector's and Maui dolphin Threat Management Plan with the aim of establishing whether a more satisfactory result could have been obtained.

He asked the meeting to bear in mind the question of how two non-mandated individuals, Keith Snow from Kaipara area (probably known to most attending from up north) and myself, were to have the ability and the resources to fairly and effectively progress the issues in a satisfactory manner on a national issue.

Bob considered the main points to be:

1. There were no representatives of amateur/recreational fishers on the group. (Bob has emails stating that the two amateurs fishers appointed to the group were appointed



because of their knowledge and experience of Hector's and Maui dolphins and netting practices and were not representatives of amateur fishers).

2. Several people accepted for the Advisory group did, in fact, represent organisations and were obviously there as a result of that and not for their experience and knowledge of netting practices and other possible threats to dolphins. (Bob read from a list that included Kevin Hackwell, F & B; Chris Howe, WWF to name two).
- 3 It was eventually decided that a separate group, the "Experts" group, be set up to consider various threats to the dolphins and it was stated that that group would bring the result of their deliberations back to the full Advisory Group where it eventual recommendations would be considered. This never happened. And there was never another meeting of the Advisory Group.
- 4 At no time was any attempt made to discuss the various incidents recorded on the DOC Hector's/Maui dolphin Incident sheet which dates back to 1921 in spite of its existence having been drawn to the notice of the first meeting by me, and, as a result, a copy being circulated to all members of the group albeit with alterations to the original list. To this day no such discussion has taken place.
- 5 At no time was any attempt made to discuss or monitor the practical effect of restrictions that had been imposed in reducing the incidence of threats to the dolphins in spite of these being readily available and being the subject of a separate paper introduced to the Advisory by Bob, and eventually referred to in the official minutes after the omission was pointed out by him and the paper was acknowledged to have been an important contribution to the group's purpose. Again, to this day, no such discussion has taken place.
- 6 No attempt was made to differentiate between commercial and amateur netting practices that may pose risk to the dolphin.
- 7 No discussion took place within the group as to what measures could be imposed to reduce the risk to dolphins from amateur set-netting activities in spite of the fact that he (Bob) had knowledge and records to show unequivocally that wherever restrictions on amateur netting had been imposed entanglements had been almost totally eliminated (Bob had developed ways to avoid the threat of recreational set netting to dolphins that were successfully implemented within the Banks Peninsula Marine Mammal Sanctuary)
- 8 At group meetings a dolphin researcher made allegations that amateur fishers were burying dolphins and not reporting netting incidents. When Bob asked if she had evidence of this she agreed she did not. It is known that she and her associated researcher have repeated this in other forums where it has gone unchallenged.

Bob firmly believes that had amateur fishers had an all encompassing national structure as is being suggested today, a far greater degree of "clout" would have been applied throughout this process and to the final result.

Bob said that one of the very disappointing aspects from his point of view was that during 2005 to 2008 when the protection of the Hector's/Maui dolphin was in the lime light it was (disappointing) to hear and see in the media statements from fishers and representatives of their organisations saying that "dolphins do not get caught in recreational nets" This was absolutely stupid and non-productive when dolphins have, in fact, been removed from these nets, four from one net in South Westland in one case - what should have been being put forward was the effectiveness of the measures that had been put in place and the acceptance of these measures.

Looking at the Minister's comments following his decision announced on 28 May 09 and to the future, Bob felt there were a few more issues he should refer to, to complete the picture.

Amateur Fishers' Data Base: Following his decision ex-Minister Anderton referred to the fact that over 6000 submissions supporting a net ban had been received as a result of a WWF world wide email campaign which he inferred carried more weight and influenced him more than factual, balanced and well reasoned submissions on measures that could provide the desired level of protection. He had previously commented on the perceived value of our Club submission being in the latter category.

This raises the question: Had one national representative amateur fishers' body existed with a comprehensive data base to resort to, what might have been the outcome? Furthermore if estimates of the number of active fishers were correct that would have gone a long way towards countering or annulling WWF, CWI and F & B data based form letter type submissions. I venture to suggest that this could not be achieved under our current fragmented regime. Had one representative organization been in place the outcome could well have been very different.

Now the South Island has an almost complete set netting ban for recreational fishers, except for a small area around the top of the South and West coast of the North Island.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Definition and abbreviations**

Amateur fishers are those who fish under the amateur fishing regulations. We have used recreational and amateur interchangeably.

QMS = Quota Management System

TAC = Total Allowable Catch

NZRFC = Recreational Fishing Council

NZSFC = Sports Fishing Council (formerly Big Game Fishing Council)

NZACA = Angling and Casting Association

NZTB = Trailer Boat Federation

NZUA = Underwater Association

SNZ = Spearfishing

CORANZ = Council of Outdoor Recreation