

Recreational kahawai harvest estimate for KAH1

A detailed presentation and discussion of available data on recreational harvest estimates for kahawai occurred at the 14th meeting of the Hokianga Accord at the Oturei marae, Dargaville on 22 April 2010.

The consensus of those present was that neither 800 t nor 1865 t should be used as the single estimate of historic recreational harvest in KAH1.

While we appreciate that MFish is looking to provide a single coherent line of advice to the Minister, we are concerned that the selection of a single base case for the kahawai stock assessment locks in a set of assumptions and management outcomes.

We note the general conclusions in the note of meeting of the Northern Inshore Working Group 26-27 March 2008 which requested "*that MFish Science ensure that users of the results are aware that the range of true uncertainty could be much larger than that represented in the four sates of nature considered*". The selection of a single model run strips away most of the underlying uncertainty in the modelling approach used.

Specific concerns

- The assumption of a single constant recreational harvest estimate for the last 35 years as a model input is clearly not true. Non-commercial harvest varies with abundance.
- It appears that 2004–05 was a particularly poor year for kahawai harvest.
- The implications for other QMAs were not discussed. There is a concern that one years aerial over flight estimates of SNA and KAH catch could be used as a benchmark for adjusting harvest estimates in other QMAs.
- While surveys based on direct observation (boat counts and ramp interviews) tend to be intuitively more precise, in examples where information is less than perfect, they tend to underestimate recreational harvest (KIN1, SNA in outer Marlborough Sounds, SNA8).
- The so called discussion document on harvest estimates in KAH1 turned up unannounced on the MFish working group web site the afternoon before the meeting. There was no time to inform the groups we represent of the rationale for selecting a harvest estimate and potential implications prior to the meeting.
- There is no MFish fisheries management forum where kahawai management objectives can be discussed. MFish still refuse to tell us what management options are being considered.
- The members of the Hokianga Accord are committed to good process and a better understanding of objectives based fisheries management. We are not convinced yet that this is being delivered.

For the Hokianga Accord
John Holdsworth
23 April 2010.