

Section 2

Getting better information on catch and value

Any effective management system depends on good information. In fisheries, this means knowing who is catching what, where and when. [37] Relatively good information is provided by commercial fishers through legally required reporting of catches. There is an obligation to report customary take under the customary fishing regulations, and efforts are being made to improve this reporting as provisions of these regulations are taken up by iwi.

For the amateur catch, information is currently collected mainly by surveys. So far, two major phone-and-diary surveys have randomly sampled the entire New Zealand population to find out who goes fishing and what they catch. These surveys are expensive and time consuming and have produced uncertain catch estimates that differ between the surveys by up to 300%. More accurate results are needed to ensure the effective management of fisheries where the amateur take represents a significant proportion of the total take. Better information is also essential if amateur interests are to be properly recognised and taken into account in effective management of shared fisheries. [38]

There is also a need to find out more about what fishers on recreational charter boats are catching. Iwi, commercial fishers and some amateur fishers have concerns about the effects of charter fishing on certain species in certain places. Charter fishing operators are not subject to specific regulations and it is not clear what effects charter fishing is having on the resource. However charter operators are in a good position to provide accurate information about their clients' catch.

In addition to information on catches, the value that commercial and amateur fishers obtain from fishing is important to efforts to improve the overall value obtained from shared fisheries. Such information would be vital for the implementation of some proposals put forward in later sections of this document.

Footnote introduction

Every fish accounted for in the 'allocation' approach versus 'social, economic and cultural well-being' (s 8 FA) approach – is there a difference?

[37] Effective management of fisheries means knowing what effect fishing is having on a fish stock. Indicators such as trends of CPUE or the relative abundance of various year classes can provide much of this information. Fisher independent CPUE and trawl surveys, tagging surveys, monitoring of boat ramps are capable of giving a clear picture of whether the size of the fishery is stable, increasing or decreasing and trends in recreational fishing participation rates.

[38] Measurement does not equate to management particularly when the subject is highly variable. In amateur fisheries, annual surveys would be required but would be prohibitively expensive. Effective manage does not require all this information, but it would be required to make MFish's proposed proportional system work.

Proposals to improve information on the amateur catch and value follow below. Please note that they are not being put forward as alternatives – one or all of these ideas could be implemented:

Proposal A: More survey and monitoring work

MFish is currently concentrating on new information-gathering methods involving flights over specific areas to count boats, and boat-ramp surveys to count catch. These are showing promising results, but are limited at present to relatively small, high-use areas of boat-based fishing. Under this proposal, MFish would develop and expand its overflight and boat ramp survey work around the country, and carry out more detailed analysis of existing data. Phone-and-diary surveys could still be carried out, but with improved methodology and supported by other survey data.

These information-gathering methods could be supplemented by other approaches, including:

- Seeking information (e.g. through fishing clubs) on the effort and take of regular fishers.
- Gaining information about fishing effort through the increased use of web-cams mounted at boat ramps and other places.
- Adding fishing questions to the Census and the three-yearly Household Economic Survey. [39]

[39] Can the amateur catch be measured with the precision required for a proportional system? The trend is more important than the known quantity of fish caught especially since the current allowances are likely to be inaccurate.

If amateur fishers have been historically under-allowed for and new information shows that amateur fishers are catching more, how does that cause a threat to sustainability or create a situation where compensation is necessary if the allowance is corrected? Quite clearly it does not.

Risk & Benefit Analysis for Proposal A - Recreational fishers risk analysis

Proposal	Risks	Benefits	Available under current Fisheries Act	Compared to current right
A More surveys	The information may be used to constrain recreational fishers to incorrectly set allowances There are two measurement issues here. Firstly can a measure of social and cultural values be derived through some	Improved understanding of the fishery and recreational participation rates More reliable stock assessments with will increase certainty about stock size and sustainability	Yes	About the same, better information is certainly required - the danger lies in what they use it for

	<p>methodology?</p> <p>Can the value derived for social and cultural values be described in a 'currency' that can directly be compared to the commercial value?</p> <p>MFish, in spite of repeated requests have not provided information on how the social and cultural values could be valued.</p> <p>We are not convinced that such values can be measured and calculated in a way that would allow comparisons of equivalence.</p>			
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Proposal B: Reporting for recreational charter operations

Under this proposal, MFish would hold a register of all charter boat operators, who would be required to regularly report on the catch and effort by amateur fishers on their boats. This information would be used to monitor fishing pressure on specific popular sites and, if necessary, take management action to protect vulnerable species such as groper. Charter boat registration would be likely to involve a charge to offset administration costs.

There is no intention to bring charter fishing into the quota management system. [40]

[40] Suggest steps aimed at placating concerns expressed by some [who?] about the level of amateur catch from charter boats.

Amateur fishers are concerned about commercial fishers deeming, dumping fish at sea, high grading, misreporting catch, illegal take and juvenile mortality.

The quantity of fish caught in these practices must be properly observed, assessed and allowed for?

Risk & Benefit Analysis for Proposal B - Recreational fishers risk analysis

Proposal	Risks	Benefits	Available under current Fisheries Act	Compared to current right
B Charter boat reporting	<p>Allowance could be used to exclude or control charter boats.</p> <p>Despite assurances it could be a pre-emptive vehicle for requiring charter boats to have quota</p> <p>Eventually the cost of collecting and processing data will be charged to charter operators.</p> <p>Another expense on charter operators that will inevitably be passed on to amateur fishers.</p> <p>Collecting poor or incomplete information will be of little value.</p>	<p>Improved information for some off-shore species.</p> <p>Improved localised information of catch of some divers.</p> <p>Possibly a catch rate information (CPUE index) from regular and experienced operators.</p>	Yes, s189	Slightly lesser. Considerable risk for very localised information.

Proposal C: Estimating relative values for commercial and amateur fishing

The aim of improved management of shared fisheries is to ensure that New Zealanders get the greatest possible value from them. The difficulty is that different user groups value the shared fisheries in different ways. Commercial users are interested mainly in dollars and cents measurement of economic activity. Customary and amateur users, on the other hand, are interested more in other values such as cultural practice or enjoyment.

To determine how the shared fisheries can produce the greatest value for everybody, these different sorts of values need to be assessed and measured against each other. This is not an absolute science, but economists have developed techniques for doing it.

Under this proposal, effort would be put firstly into developing and adapting methods that could produce useful valuation information about our shared fisheries. These methods would then be used to assess relative values for fishing by commercial and amateur sectors in specific fisheries, so that this information could be taken into account in management decision-making. [41]

[41] Whether a ‘values’ based ‘allocation approach’ offers any certainty to amateur fishers appears very doubtful.

Previously option4 asked MFish that participation rates and/or population trends be used to guide allocation decisions so that the interests of individual amateur fishers are not diminished over time. This was to be a two-way system; if the worldwide trend away from recreational fishing occurs in New Zealand the fishing industry would win a quota increase.

Why has a ‘value’ based approach been selected in preference to this model? The answer to this question is important for New Zealanders to gauge for themselves MFish’s fisheries management ability.

Risk & Benefit Analysis for Proposal C - Recreational fishers’ risk analysis

Proposal	Risks	Benefits	Available under current Fisheries Act	Compared to current right
C Relative values research	<p>Amateur catch is likely to be under-valued because of technical difficulties with a value approach.</p> <p>May require catch reductions in high value commercial species.</p> <p>There are two measurement issues here. Firstly, can a measure of social and cultural values be derived through some methodology?</p> <p>Can the value derived for social and cultural values</p>	<p>Increased recreational allowances in some high value recreational fisheries that are of low commercial value. Kahawai, blue cod and kingfish seem to be only species in this category, could be more.</p> <p>May allow fish stocks to be managed above Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY).</p>	Yes	Not as certain. Because there is loss in commercial high value stocks, and gain in low commercial valued stocks

	<p>be described in a 'currency' that can directly be compared to the commercial value?</p> <p>MFish, in spite of repeated requests have not provided information on how the social and cultural values could be valued. We are not convinced that such values can be measured and calculated in a way that would allow comparisons of equivalence. If this cannot be done than the proposal is a sham.</p>			
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