

catch in depleted stocks, are considered to have significantly disadvantaged the amateur fishing sector. Industry advocates have strongly expressed the view that they have legitimate existing rights to a proportion of the TAC, and they should be fully compensated for any reallocation to the amateur sector.

It is proposed to allow for baseline allocations to be re-set in a limited number of contentious shared fish stocks, and provide for the definition of criteria for future adjustments between the amateur and commercial sectors for all shared fisheries. The following options are proposed to re-set current allocations to form a new baseline allocation for some particularly contentious key fish stocks:

- Assessing the historical evidence and determining an appropriate baseline for allocation, taking into account the impacts of past management, or
- Estimating relative values in the commercial and amateur sectors and determining a baseline allocation to maximise value, or
- Implementing the agreed outcome of a structured negotiation process between stakeholders.

Herein lies part of the problem. As allocation decisions that acknowledge the impact of historical circumstances on current shares could increase value, and may assist amateur stakeholders to move beyond the sense of grievance that has made policy reform in this area such a problem in the recent past. Or it may favour the commercial sector, and further entrench their existing allocations even though these may exist at the expense of other stakeholders, as these may have been historically achieved because the commercial sector has stronger negotiating skills and a larger funding base.

New Zealanders have always held the strong view that they have the right to cast a line in the sea and catch a fish and that this cultural tradition should continue. Providing for this is part of our values – it is part of our national identity.

It is proposed that a basic level of amateur take be protected and maintained over time by establishing a minimum tonnage for amateur take in each shared fishery. This tonnage would have preference over commercial take, and would only be reduced if necessary to ensure sustainability (and all commercial fishing had ceased.)

There is no objective criteria to set the minimum tonnage. The amount is an expression of the degree to which it is considered that some amateur access should have preference over commercial take. The minimum tonnage could be set for each stock by determining the tonnage equivalent to a proportion, for instance 20 percent of the baseline amateur allocation.

#### **Supporting fisheries management capacity in the amateur fishing sector**

Lack of organisational capacity in the amateur fishing sector – and the consequent lack of coordinated input into fisheries management – creates an imbalance in multi-stakeholder processes. A large part of the fisheries management process involves influencing the behaviour of stakeholders in ways that can realise the full potential of fisheries resources. Stakeholders should have an increasingly im-

portant role to play in areas of management, such as providing input to decision-making frameworks and setting standards.

To realise these benefits, the amateur fishing sector needs to engage more fully in fisheries management processes. At present, the sector is represented almost exclusively by volunteers, and its funding and representation structures are weak. Sector representatives need to be equipped to reflect their stakeholders' views and interests. Access to professional staff is important for the sector to achieve effective input to fisheries plans, to engage with other sectors on allocation, spatial access and fisheries enhancement, and to provide advice on managing amateur fishing.

There are two main issues associated with building capacity: funding and representation. The experience with the amateur sector in the New Zealand has been that representative structures have not developed readily, despite considerable efforts, and self-funding is difficult.

It is proposed that the government assist the amateur sector to establish representative governance structures to participate in fisheries management. Successful representation models need to provide a high level of transparency and accountability of procedures and methods of decision-making. An advantage of taking the initiative is that the government will be able to set some standards of accountability.

#### **Establish an amateur fishing trust**

An intermediate step is proposed to maximise support by stakeholders for a long-term solution to sector capacity and representation. This is for the government to establish an Amateur Fishing Trust to support the engagement of amateur fishers in fisheries management. The minister would appoint the trustees.

To meet its purpose, the trust would work with existing amateur fishing organisations to:

- Provide professional capacity to engage in fisheries management processes
- Fund projects that advance the purpose of the trust, and
- Promote the development of a representative, accountable and funded governance structure for the amateur fishing sector.

The trust deed would establish requirements such as public reporting obligations on the trustees, accountability criteria for applicant organisations to request support from the trust's staff, and governance criteria to develop a representative structure accountable to amateur fishers. This criteria would include high-level standards for electoral, accountability and reporting requirements.

Establishment funding for the trust would come from the government, but the trust could also receive funds from other sources. It is anticipated that government funding of approximately \$3 million would enable the trust to operate for 10 years, including employing staff to help the trust achieve its goals. I believe this proposed amount is optimistically low and would not be sustainable for the suggested 10 years.

While working with the amateur fishing sector to define future governance arrangements,

trust staff would also carry out some of the roles envisaged for a future representative structure such as:

- Promoting debate and coordinating the views of amateur fishing organisations on national issues
- Communicating those views to MFish and the government
- Advising and working with amateur fishing organisations to engage in fisheries plan processes, and
- Assisting amateur fishing organisations to develop their own internal representative and accountable governance structures, and other functionality such as fundraising.

By providing this support, the trust would strengthen existing amateur fishing organisations. This activity would take place at the same time as the trust was undertaking work to promote the development of a governance structure to represent the interests of the entire amateur fishing sector. (I would suggest that this may take the place of some existing organisations.) There is a threat that if not done right, the ministry will run the risk of recreating the wheel and in setting up alternative organisations it will lose the knowledge gained over the past decades by these existing voluntary groups.

Although it may take some time for a representative organisation to become established, the trust would directly involve stakeholders in developing the model for long-term representation of the sector. This is likely to provide greater assurance of stakeholder support for the future representation structure. There is, however, no guarantee that a representative organisation would be established.

A matching funding arrangement could be supported through the trust to provide incentives for a new or existing organisation to generate funds, but any such funding, and the life of the trust, would be limited in duration.

Use of government funding can create dependencies and a disincentive for the sector to generate funds itself. However, due to the dispersed nature of these interests and incentives for individuals to free ride, raising funds from all amateur fishers will remain difficult. Once a new representative organisation has been established and has had the chance to prove its effectiveness, direct fundraising may become easier. Apart from general public appeals, fundraising options include merchandising, publishing, contracts for services, sponsorships, donations, or various forms of subscribed membership.

So, now we can see the urgent need for all of us to get involved. If you value your rights to fish for food or fun, be pro-active and have your say. Contact MFish staff on 0800 666 675, or visit the shared fisheries section on

[www.fish.govt.nz](http://www.fish.govt.nz)

Or contact the Secretary of the NZ Recreational Fishing Council, Sheryl Hart Ph: 07 8258867 Mob: 021 943018 email: [nzrfcsheryl@actrix.co.nz](mailto:nzrfcsheryl@actrix.co.nz)

Most of all, if you do nothing else, visit our new website:

[www.recfish.co.nz](http://www.recfish.co.nz)

and send us your views in the simple-to-use questionnaire or make a donation. Your fishing future is in your hands.

