

NZ Sport Fishing Council - Update

Richard Baker, President, NZ Sport Fishing Council

Richard Baker apologised for his brief visit to the hui, he had to return to Auckland by 7pm. He was very pleased to be able to catch up with old friends and meet a few new people at this hui. As President of NZ Sport Fishing (NZSF) Richard was keen to give an update on how things had changed for his Council, management team and recreational fishing representation.

The Council has changed its name from the New Zealand Big Game Fishing Council to the NZ Sport Fishing Council. They maintain their 58 clubs nationwide and have around 32,000 members, most of whom were sustenance fishers keen to catch a feed for their whanau.

Since mid 2009 Sport & Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) has recognised their Council as representing recreational fishing in New Zealand. This was an outcome of a change in focus, from big game fishing to sustenance fishing, fisheries management, representation and advocacy for non-commercial fishing interests.

At the last hui Sonny challenged Richard to analyse the representation of the recreational sector, determine what the ideal outcome would be and how the Council could contribute to better advocacy of non-commercial interests. This had proven to be a huge challenge, but the 14-member management committee was prepared to develop a more professional approach to ensure the children of Aotearoa inherited healthy fisheries.

There has been some controversial reaction to the Council's initiative to re-brand itself and establish their organisation as an entity with a fulltime manager employing contractors, such as John Holdsworth and Trish Rea, to engage in the fisheries management processes.

Evan MacKay, the Council's Vice-President, was also at the hui. Currently he is working as the Council's education and liaison person supporting the successful Hiwi the Kiwi Goes Fishing project that is being presented by Mark de Lacy, aka The Minstrel. This programme is designed for primary school children and teaches them about fishing, how to protect the marine environment and water safety. Around 170 primary schools have booked The Minstrel's show for 2010.

Bill Ross accompanied Richard to the hui. Bill was working with the management committee to develop a strategic and business plan in anticipation of applying for SPARC funding. SPARC has contestable funds available to support programmes aimed at children and participation in fishing activities.

On behalf of NZ Sport Fishing, Richard thanked the option4 team for their effort and the Guardians of the Sea Charitable Trust *Nga Kaitiaki mo Tangaroa* for their ongoing support of the Hiwi the Kiwi project. The Guardians recently approved a further grant for \$10,000 towards the production of a Hiwi the Kiwi Goes Fishing book and CD of stories and songs.

Richard and NZSF warmly appreciated the support of Black Magic Tackle, who has contributed the initial \$10,000 to the Trust. Rick Wakelin and Black Magic contributes \$10 from the sale of every gamefishing lure from the 'option4' lure range to support input to various fisheries management processes and now the Hiwi the Kiwi project.

Acknowledgement was given to John Holdsworth and the environmental organisations at the hui who had contributed to the development of the Council's recent Southern Bluefin Tuna submission. This was a fishery in serious decline and NZSF had advocated for commercial fishing effort to be curtailed until the stock had recovered to sustainable levels. NZSF was promoting a tag and release programme for their members and other recreational fishers in an effort to enhance research into this vulnerable species.

A major event for NZSF was the upcoming Hutchwilco Boat Show in Auckland. Show organisers have provided a large stand to showcase the Council and the Hiwi the Kiwi programme. It was encouraging to

have the retail fishing industry supporting the NZSF and their project aimed at children and getting them involved in fishing.

Both Ngapuhi and Ngati Whatua have confirmed, through Sonny Tau and Naida Glavish, they will support NZSF in their SPARC funding application. This iwi support was a major boost and widely appreciated by the NZ Sport Fishing Council.

Hui Discussion

Richard confirmed NZSF had not yet applied for SPARC funding. Their focus has been on consolidating their management structure and business plan. However, notice had been received that SPARC has available a contestable fund of \$1.2 million per annum for the next three years. These funds are to promote outdoor recreation. Applications for grants closed mid-May.

Given the current political climate the NZSF were encouraged to include a Maori component in their funding applications. Doing so could prove to be the key to success.

Another avenue is to apply for funding, on the basis of the sporting component, to the local District Health Board in relation to the Healthy eating - Healthy action programme.

The support from Ngapuhi and Ngati Whatua for the Council's SPARC grant applications was pleasing. It was also recognition of the strong relationship that had developed between the organisations involved in the Hokianga Accord.

It was an ambitious project that the NZ Sport Fishing had embarked on, given that fishing is the fourth most popular activity for adults in Aotearoa. Richard and his management team were congratulated on their effort to represent the non-commercial interests of approximately 600,000 thousand people who go fishing every year. The whanau and friends of those fishers benefit from their effort, as do the thousands of people who do not fish but have an interest in having a healthy marine environment and abundant fisheries.

The Council realises that maintaining a healthy marine environment and abundant fish stocks will not be an easy task. There are difficulties because of the fishing industry's stranglehold on management processes and successive government's desire to generate national wealth from selling off as much fish as possible.