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16 December 2009

Aquaculture Submissions
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CORANZ Submission on Aquaculture

1 Introduction

The Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations (CORANZ) is an apolitical coalition of outdoor recreational national bodies, working together to identify and protect the common basic values of outdoor recreation for all New Zealanders. Over one million New Zealanders participate in outdoor recreation.

2 Submission

Inshore waters are a popular recreational resource for New Zealanders. Fishing, swimming, boating and other water activities are a large part of the public's outdoor recreation. CORANZ approves of controlled and limited marine farming within environmental and recreational considerations. Unfortunately in the past aquaculture development has been akin to a "gold rush" mentality as once described by current Environment minister Nick Smith.

Many existing aquaculture areas, e.g. Marlborough Sounds, have sufficient development. It has to be appreciated that an area of water has a "carrying capacity" akin to any farming operation. Overstepping that is not only eroding recreational opportunities, but is detrimental to aquaculture's own production.

CORANZ does not regard aquaculture as a solution to over-fishing. Fish farming is not a solution to wild fisheries mismanagement! Fish farming cannot be compared to sensibly managed natural fisheries. Fin fish farming via cages is not environmentally sound. The tendency is to crowd to maximise profits with disease potential and fouling of the sea bed beneath. Fish farming struggles to epitomise New Zealand's clean green pure image used to promote exports on overseas markets.

CORANZ opposes new aquaculture areas or extension of existing aquaculture. Recreation, especially fishing, is a popular public leisure and food harvesting activity. It has been estimated between 800,000 and one million New Zealanders enjoy fishing in its various forms. Access to

bays and inlets for recreation plus the need for boating anchorages is growing. An aquaculture farm is occupying public property. A quaculture crowds out recreational fishing, boating and other recreational and commercial water activities.

Overseas fish farming has resulted in various problems such as disease, organic pollution and undesirable genetic tainting of wild stocks such as trout and salmon. In addition, the economics are not great. Aquaculture often is high in risk, requiring heavy capital and is marginally economic.

CORANZ draws attention to overseas research that points to mussel farms ingesting current-carried fish larvae. It is commonly believed Marlborough Sounds blue cod spawn on Marlborough's east coast and eggs are carried on the southerly current to "seed" the Sounds and coastline.

Recommendation: CORANZ urges immediate research into this subject before any more aquaculture development is considered.

Recommendation: CORANZ urges full opportunity for the public's participation in planning processes and consent applications, because of the adverse impact of aquaculture on sea ecosystems and other recreational and commercial marine activity in the area.

Recommendation: CORANZ insists local, regional and district councils must be able to prohibit marine farms in recognition of the public's recreational access rights and heritage, independent of central government wishes

CORANZ rejects any suggestion the minister be allowed to overturn a local council decision or to change regional plans, about aquaculture. CORANZ agrees with the proposal to alter the consent lapse period from five to three years.

Research is immediately required as to the full impact of aquaculture on the habitat and other fish species.

CORANZ also supports the aquaculture submission on Option4. We wish to be kept informed of future developments.

Yours truly

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