

Fisheries 2030 - an alternative vision and strategy from environmental and non-commercial fishing interests

Summary of recommendations for the Minister of Fisheries

31 July 2009

We recommend:

Intention

Measures to improve harvesting techniques thereby providing food and jobs for New Zealanders while reducing the risks to the health and abundance of our fisheries and the marine environment.

Conserving our fisheries for future generations of New Zealanders, achieved by applying and giving meaningful effect to the statutory obligation on the Minister to have particular regard to kaitiakitanga (guardianship/stewardship) of our fisheries and environment, our (taonga).

Improve economic returns from well-managed fisheries

Implementing a strategy to increase the yield from each fish, by leaving them in the water to grow older and larger. Maintaining fish populations at higher biomass levels will support catch limits that satisfy both fishing and environmental interest groups. This will also enable us to pass on this same marine abundance and diversity to future generations of New Zealanders.

Environmental precaution and an ecosystem approach

Future stock assessment models that integrate habitat and spatial concerns, genetics, multi-species interactions, environmental factors, effects of harvesting on the ecosystem, model mis-specification and socio-economic concerns.

In developing such models the limitations of current fisheries science must be made explicit and incorporated at the management, policy and advice levels. Where information is lacking or uncertain, precautionary management procedures and decision-making to protect the environment is crucial.

Move away from reliance on maximum sustainable yield

Moving away from the current MSY target to the alternative strategy of maintaining a much higher biomass of individual fish stocks, with a broad range of age classes, to ensure productivity and diversity across the marine ecosystem as a whole, and to provide some risk margin.

Reducing wastage

Increasing the biomass and age of fish to reduce wastage. Minimising bycatch levels and utilising the whole fish caught are other ways to reduce this waste thereby conserving and showing respect for the resource.

Reversing the unintended genetic consequences of past management practices

The development of strategies and practices to both enable the active selection of more productive fish and to reverse the unintended genetic selection pressure on fisheries. Solutions can be adapted to suit both local conditions and the community's aspirations for fisheries management.

Leaving large fish in the water

Seasonal and area-based management controls to protect larger, breeding fish thereby ensuring high levels of recruitment and providing insurance for the future health and abundance of New Zealand's fisheries.

Improving yield and potential earning per recruit

Measures that include increasing the minimum legal size (MLS) of fish, where appropriate, to increase the yield from each recruit, and to maximise the earnings from each fish killed.

We also recommend strong incentives to improve the yield from commercial fishing, starting with allowing the biomass of a fish stock to increase resulting in the presence of larger fish as a consequence.

Eliminating destructive fishing methods

Working towards eliminating destructive fishing practices by providing incentives to switch to alternative, more sustainable fishing technologies that incur higher market value through increased consumer demand for such products.

Responding to the effects of climate change

A stronger precautionary approach in fisheries management in response to the uncertainty associated with the effects of climate change.

Integrate land management with marine and fisheries management

Urgent action to prevent loss of the near-shore marine environment to the cascading adverse effects that begin with vegetation clearance, nutrient run-off and sediment outfalls that cumulatively result in inert or dead zones.

1992 Maori fisheries Deed of Settlement - kaitiakitanga

The Minister gives effect to the ongoing obligations on the Crown, pursuant to the 1992 Maori fisheries Deed of Settlement and fisheries legislation, to provide for the input and participation of tangata whenua into fisheries and area management while having particular regard to kaitiakitanga. This will significantly improve the health and abundance of our fisheries and be beneficial for all New Zealanders.

Integrated governance of fisheries

Ongoing support for local communities and iwi/hapu who have initiated rehabilitation projects that seek to restore the near-shore environment and the fisheries, so they can continue to serve the wider public's interests.

We also recommend non-commercial fishing interest groups continue to explore governance models to improve the long-term prospects of maintaining meaningful input and participation in fisheries management processes.