

Hokianga Accord Update #29

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Exciting developments in Accord relationships

Living on an island kai moana, food from the sea, has been a traditional part of our diet for centuries. This custom is being lost as seafood becomes scarce in places we normally fish. Exorbitant prices mean many families can no longer afford to feed their children fish, to the detriment of our health and well-being.

Before, during and after the introduction of the quota system the fundamental, customary right to fish and feed your family was never part of the negotiations. So when we started on the path to establishing the Hokianga Accord, a collective of commercial, customary and recreational fishing interests, we never envisaged it would be so difficult to protect this tradition.

Fish are one of the last wild populations to be hunted for food. Having a healthy marine environment supporting a diverse range of species is essential to maintaining this food supply. That is why, five years later, the Accord is still striving to achieve "more fish in the water/kia maha atu nga ika ki roto i te wai".

April Accord hui

Plans are underway to hold our first hui for 2010 on 15/16 April. Venue to be confirmed. Everyone is welcome to attend. Check next month's Update for more details, visit www.HokiangaAccord.co.nz or call Shelley Naera on 0275 872466.

Fisheries 2030

During 2009 the Hokianga Accord worked with a number of other environmental and fishing groups to develop a joint response to the Ministry of Fisheries' 2030 proposals. The collective effort culminated in a series of correspondence with MFish and a meeting with the Minister.

This joint approach was an effort to stave off the commercial focus of the proposals and ensure a more balanced approach to fisheries management, to achieve abundance and availability of important species.

In late August the Cabinet endorsed the Minister's version of Fisheries 2030. This document was almost identical to the original proposals that had generated so much concern amongst the non-commercial sector.

On Christmas Eve MFish issued an invitation to attend a meeting in early February to discuss how the Ministry will measure its success in achieving its goal of "*New Zealanders maximising benefits from the use of fisheries within environmental limits*".

Two people will attend and report back to the forum after the Wellington-based meeting. This issue will also be discussed during the April Accord hui.

Seaweeds

The Hokianga Accord is committed to working with a wide range of interests to achieve sustainable levels of fish stocks and seaweeds.

Since we lodged our joint submission, with option4, on the MFish Bladder Kelp proposals we have made contact with the Seaweed Association of New Zealand (SANZ). SANZ are not convinced that the quota system is a sensible management tool so they are keen to discuss the future management of seaweeds.

SANZ hold similar concerns about the potential loss of habitat due to the commercial harvest of seaweed and recognise that seaweeds have a vital role in sustaining other inshore fisheries.

This meeting is an exciting development and the Hokianga Accord will keep you updated with progress.