

Hokianga Accord Update #3

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It was very pleasing for the mid north iwi fisheries forum, known as the Hokianga Accord, to receive such resounding support from the NZ Fishing News (NZFN) editor in the October Candid Comment.

As noted in the editorial, a day spent fishing on northern waters certainly doesn't produce the results that our old people talk about, and often not even enough to feed the whanau.

After nine hui and countless discussions amongst Ngapuhi, Ngati Whatua, Ngati Wai, option4 and the NZ Big Game Fishing Council (NZBGFC), northern iwi and hapu are beginning to understand why the quota management system has not delivered healthy fisheries for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

And while many may argue that Maori now own more than 50 percent of commercial fishing interests in Aotearoa, the Hokianga Accord have made it abundantly clear that putting food on the table for the mokopuna (grandchildren) takes priority over commercial gains made from exporting fish to foreign tables.

What has surprised the Accord is the relentless need to continually respond to fisheries management and marine protection proposals from both the Ministry of Fisheries (MFish) and Department of Conservation (DoC). For un-resourced volunteers the resulting workload has been significant. In the past year the Accord has been party to a number of significant documents including:

- Joint deemed value review submission
- Preliminary view of MFish' Shared Fisheries proposals
- The People's Submission on MFish' Shared Fisheries proposals
- Submissions to the annual review of sustainability measures
- Joint Marine Protected Area submission
- Submission on the Hector's and Maui dolphin draft threat management plan.

To do justice to these and other issues within limited timeframes is a "big ask" of iwi and hapu from the mid and far north. Much of the time we are being expected to compromise our consultation protocols just to follow the official programme. Poor process leads to inadequate outcomes. Both MFish and DoC know this.

However, the good news is that these challenges have given us the chance to work alongside other non-commercial fishers to achieve the common goal of "more fish in the water/ kia maha atu nga ika i roto i te wai".

Kaitiakitanga (guardianship)

Another eye-opener has been the effort non-Maori are making to try and understand and accept the principles of kaitiakitanga (guardianship/trusteeship). For Maori this has been an unexpected outcome of the relationship that has developed between all of us who are particularly concerned about making sure there is enough fish for our mokopuna.

Local area management by tangata whenua and communities who treasure their 'patch' has to be better than what we are being force-fed by MFish and DoC, in the form of depleted fisheries and

marine reserves. All we need are the tools and resources to implement changes that will deliver benefits that everyone can enjoy.

Encouragement for the Hokianga Accord from the NZFN team is very heartening. We look forward to reciprocating the generosity at the tenth hui in Auckland and future hui.

Kia kaha!