

Hokianga Accord Update #42

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Fish for life and health

As the squeeze goes on household budgets it is important there are healthy numbers of fish available for those who seek to feed their whanau. The upcoming hui of the Hokianga Accord, the mid north iwi fisheries forum, will be discussing a range of topics related to ensuring access to our fisheries. This will be achieved through careful land management, conservative use of the fisheries and maintaining the ability of all New Zealanders to go down to the sea and fish for food.

Venue for the next Accord hui is Oturei Marae on the Pouto Peninsula, at the mouth of the Kaipara Harbour. This hui is open to the public and you are welcome to come and participate. If you have not been on a marae before this is a warm place to enjoy the experience.

For more, call Shelley Naera on 027 5872466, Trish Rea on 0274 175121 or visit http://www.option4.co.nz/Fish_Forums/hahuinfo.htm

Healthy people

In 2008 the Ministry of Health published a report, *Atlas of Socioeconomic Deprivation in New Zealand*, and noted that high housing costs leave less money for other budget items essential to people's good health.

It makes grim reading when hard facts show Maori are bottom of many indices, including health, child welfare, education and employment. Having access to our kaimoana [seafood] is a good basis for improving the health and well-being of our communities.

Common ground

Another development has been the advent of the regional fisheries forums. In 2005 the Ministry of Fisheries sought to establish Iwi Customary forums and separate groups for recreational fishermen.

After preliminary hui with recreational fishing advocates, mid north iwi agreed to a more productive way of addressing common concerns. That is because most of our fishing to feed the whanau is legally categorised as recreational, so it is only natural that we would want to discuss management issues with our Pakeha neighbours in the same forum.

Ngati Wai has committed to dealing directly with the Crown. Both Ngapuhi and Ngati Whatua have agreed that the Hokianga Accord is the forum where fisheries issues will be discussed, debated and resolved amongst commercial, customary, environmental and recreational interests.

Since 2005 there have been fourteen overnight public hui, many more Working Group meetings and countless hours spent striving to achieve the agreed objective of "more fish in the water/kia maha atu nga ika ki roto i te wai".

Now there is a greater understanding about why some areas are so depleted, what needs to be done to rebuild these fisheries and why the Crown has a statutory obligation to provide for all New Zealander's social, economic and cultural well-being.

Plentiful fish

Having abundant fisheries and a healthy marine environment enables commercial and non-commercial fishers, both customary and recreational, to support their businesses, provide for their marae and whanau needs.

More than 80 percent of Maori now live in urban areas so fishing has become both a food-gathering exercise and an opportunity to spend time with the tamariki [children].

For most pre-teens there needs to be lots of action to maintain their interest. Having plenty of fish available contributes to a happy day's fishing and enough food to drop off to the elders on the way home. In years to come our tamariki will repeat this tradition, but only if there are fish available.

Visit www.HokiangaAccord.co.nz