

## **Hokianga Accord Update #9**

NZ Fishing News JUNE 2008 edition

MAY 2008

It wasn't that long ago when Maori and non-Maori were eyeballing each other at the first Hokianga Accord hui wondering where it all might lead. It was the first time, in Tai Tokerau at least, that Ngapuhi and Ngati Whatua had come face to face with 'those recreational fishermen', with the objective of working together on issues of common interest to both customary and amateur fishermen. After three productive years the report card is positive with the age-old rider, "we can do better".

Inspired by the leadership of Sonny Tau, Naida Glavish and Judah Heihei, the mid north iwi fisheries forum is evolving into an effective, collective voice for non-commercial fishing interests. The NZ Big Game Fishing Council and option4 have committed to supporting the Accord and achieving the goal of 'more fish in the water/kia maha atu nga ika ki roto i te wai'.

Many traditional fishing places are depleted and no longer capable of providing for non-commercial fishers' customary or sustenance needs. The effects of this depletion means smaller and fewer fish are available. This impacts on the mana of iwi/hapu and also because around 34 percent of all 'recreational' fishermen are Maori.

After eleven overnight hui and countless working group hui everyone is clear that the vast majority of kaimoana harvested by tangata whenua is taken under the amateur fishing regulations.

In 2005 Ngapuhi's Chairman, Sonny Tau, explained, "99.99 percent of the time Maori go fishing to feed our whanau we are categorised as recreational fishers. The only time we are customarily fishing is when we have a permit".

Another early discovery was the collective distaste for the term 'recreational' fishing. The Accord has agreed that it will refer to fishing to put food on the table as amateur or sustenance fishing.

Customary fishing is not so clear-cut. Discussions with the Ministry of Fisheries are continuing on how customary fishing is defined, and often confined, by various interpretations of the Crown's obligations to tangata whenua. MFish continues to obstruct northern iwi and a letter has been sent to the Minister of Fisheries explaining the issues and requesting a meeting. Jim Anderton's office has responded and any meeting will be reported on later.

### **Fisheries Act amendment**

Also of concern is the proposal to amend section 13 of the Fisheries Act 1996. MFish organised an urgent meeting in mid-April to discuss a recent High Court decision that went against the Minister, and subsequent moves to amend the legislation so management can carry on as is.

After two Accord representatives attended the Wellington meeting another letter was sent to the Minister expressing some concerns. We also offered our assistance to achieve an outcome that will give any fisheries Minister the legislative authority to set catch levels to achieve the purpose of the Act.

Having abundant inshore fisheries that enable all New Zealanders to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing, while ensuring enough fish is left in the water for our mokopuna, fits with the Hokianga Accord's overall goal. Visit [www.HokiangaAccord.co.nz](http://www.HokiangaAccord.co.nz).