

Government Is After Our Fish Again!

Procrastination and pointing the finger of blame have become commonplace in fisheries management. Long-term solutions exist to fix the problems in shared fisheries where commercial, recreational and customary fishers have an interest.

All we need from the Government and the Ministry of Fisheries (MFish) is a willingness to fix the problems including overfishing leading to depletion.

A lack of commitment has brought about an environmental issue of significance for all New Zealanders, not just those of us who fish for food or fun.

Undoubtedly we need to address the problems in fisheries such as snapper, gurnard, flounder, blue cod and kahawai. However, the Government's latest attempt to decide how fisheries should be managed fails to address the real issues.

Instead, the MFish 'Shared Fisheries' paper infers that amateur fishermen are the problem and the only way to fix it is to take away our common law right to fish!

Worse still, this is happening without the majority of people even being aware that their fishing future is under threat. This is not good enough.

The teams involved in developing a response to the paper - "The People's Submission" - have been working tirelessly to develop achievable, affordable and robust solutions to rebuild our coastal fisheries.

Representatives from option4, the New Zealand Big Game Fishing Council, Ngapuhi, Ngati Whatua and many other individuals agree that the 1996 Fisheries Act has not been applied as it was intended and that existing mechanisms should be used to restore our fisheries.

The overwhelming answer is: just get on with giving effect to the Fisheries Act and don't tell us to give up our right to fish. It is not for sale!

Visit www.option4.co.nz to find out what you can do to stop the Government stealing your fishing future.