

option4 Update #129

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A bouquet and the quest for precautionary fisheries management

It was a privilege for several of the option4 team to join the recent 80th birthday celebrations for John Chibnall, a legend in fishing circles. John has been at the forefront of protecting the public's right to fish long before many of us were born. For over 50 years John's love of fishing has taken him to many sunny climes around the world and into the dark spaces of fisheries management and politics.

John was part of a team that was instrumental in convincing the government to banish foreign longliners from our northern shores in 1988. Part of this agreement was the commitment that at least 50 percent of all marlin caught by recreational fishers would be tagged and released.

Due to successful promotion and educational initiatives the NZ Sport Fishing Council (formerly NZ Big Game FC) reports that for many years 65 percent of all recreationally-caught marlin have been released to fight another day.

As chairman of the NZ Marine Research Foundation John supported a satellite tagging programme of striped marlin. Results show detailed behaviour of fish for months after tagging and proved that almost all lure-caught fish survive, if released in good condition.

There are many achievements that can be attributed to the tenacity and principled approach John has taken to fisheries management over the years. Well done John and we look forward to more successes in the future.

Crayfish catch increases

option4 and the NZ Sport Fishing Council Zone 5 clubs jointly submitted on the recent rock lobster management proposals. Other non-commercial groups also commented on the management procedures suggested for crayfish stocks around Gisborne and the proposed doubling, almost, of the commercial catch limit in the Hawke Bay to Wellington region.

Common concerns relate to the Ministry of Fisheries' concession that enables commercial fishers to take crayfish smaller than the normal legal size. These concessions exist in the Gisborne, Otago and Southland regions. In many areas this extraction has denied customary and amateur fishers access to sufficient numbers of legal crayfish.

While it maybe difficult to quantify the environmental impacts of allowing large numbers of small crayfish to be taken from the stock, most submitters urged the Minister of Fisheries to take a more precautionary management approach.

Rock lobster is a valuable fishery for all interests, commercial and non-commercial, and ought to be preserved for future generations of New Zealanders.

http://www.option4.co.nz/Fisheries_Mgmt/crayfish.htm

Aquaculture reforms

MFish is currently reviewing the 223 submissions received in response to the proposed aquaculture reforms. option4 was one of 80 recreational interests who submitted. There were over 30 submissions from environmental groups and 16 from customary interests.

This high level of response reflects the concerns that all interest groups have in ensuring aquaculture development is sustainable, both environmentally and economically, that local communities are consulted prior to farming activities, and does not result in the coastline being privatised to the exclusion of the New Zealand public.

MFish is considering the submissions and will develop their aquaculture policy before Cabinet is asked to approve the proposed reforms in March.

http://www.option4.co.nz/Fisheries_Mgmt/aquaculture_reforms.htm

Pic

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Caption : (L-R) Trish Rea, John Holdsworth, John Chibnall and Richard Baker at John's 80th birthday celebration held at the Bay of Islands Swordfish Club, Paihia.