

option4 Update #96

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Fisheries Ignorance Tackled

Many New Zealanders are concerned about the pressure on coastal fisheries, marine resources and the lack of knowledge of fisheries law. To address this a multi-lingual website www.fish4nz.co.nz has been designed to help people to understand how they can help protect the fisheries and marine environment.

Key areas have been identified where there is a lack of information within many communities:

- How fisheries are managed
- Rules and regulations
- Identifying fish species
- What are marine reserves, mataitai, taiapure and rahui?
- Safety in and around the water

The site is available in the following languages:

- English
- Maori
- Chinese
- Vietnamese
- Korean
- Samoan
- Japanese

Identifying different species is often not easy. Using the simple guide in the Fish Identification System you can find species from elephant fish to sand flounder.

option4 and the Hokianga Accord, the mid north iwi fisheries forum, launched this initiative in 2006 as the first step towards bringing this information to the widest possible audience.

Support of the Accord has enabled innovative features such as a glossary of Maori terms translated into six other languages. With an emphasis on safe fishing tips and how to recognise different species it is envisaged the website will become a valuable education tool for all New Zealanders.

Great Barrier Reserve

In 2003 the Department of Conservation proposed a very large marine reserve for the northeastern coast of Aotea (Great Barrier Island), out to the 12-nautical mile limit. Strong opposition to the proposal was expressed at a number of public meetings. The application stage has been completed and the Conservation Minister has approved the reserve. The final stage in the process is underway now.

The Minister of Fisheries, Jim Anderton, has been asked to provide his concurrence (agreement) and allow the marine reserve to be formalised.

Jim Anderton visited Aotea in September 2007 and held two meetings; one at Claris and the other was a hui at Motairehe marae. The objective was to hear the local's view of the impacts of the proposed marine reserve.

Mr. Anderton opened the hui by saying:

“I will consider what you tell me today before I make my decision....I acknowledge Maori customary rights, and customary rights will be protected...I acknowledge Maori recreational rights....You have asked me to consider your future generations and I will do that....I know the cultural value of catching a fish....We want to comply with the rules of the Act, and I note that marine reserves must not be contrary to the public interest.”

A vote of 100% against the proposal was recorded at the hui. Officials did not participate in this vote.

For four years DoC have bulldozed the people with their reserve proposal while there is very clear opposition to it. Strong support exists for local management. Tangata whenua and locals are hoping Jim Anderton sticks to his comments and protects the rights of the Aotea people and the wider public's interest in maintaining access to the northeastern coast. His decision is awaited with interest.