

Review of sustainability for Kahawai

Trudie Macfarlane
Ministry Of Fisheries
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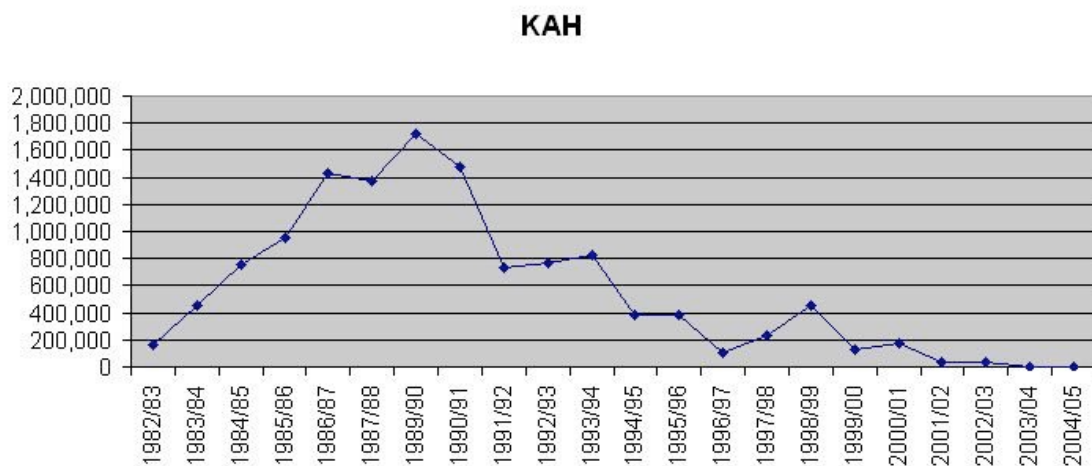
Hi Trudie

This submission is on behalf of Kaikoura Boating Club, membership 439

Basically we want to see a substantial Kahawai biomass increase in Kaikoura and for Commercial harvest to be reduced to bycatch only until sufficient recovery has been achieved.

Whilst we have seen some small gains in recent years, the amounts of Kahawai that appear are way too low, some people, including myself have seen Kahawai in Kaikoura in close to its virgin state in the 1950's. A spectacular sight, obviously that can't be achieved nowadays but an acceptable level certainly can, the present levels of Kahawai in Kaikoura are unacceptable.

During the boom and bust of commercial Kahawai in Kaikoura over 10,000 tonnes was harvested in fishing area 018, the plateau areas on either side of Kaikoura Peninsular left the schooling Kahawai as 'sitting ducks' for purse seine operations with much of the Kahawai used as cray bait in Australia – our concern is that the Kahawai use be 'value added'



It is worth noting that during these years the commercial fleet fishing this area consisted mostly of 2 vessels, owned by two of the largest companies, and was essentially unconstrained by any catch limits. This graph shows a classic case of a fishery fished to commercial extinction (as distinct from biological extinction). These are the same corporate entities that are claiming that they are now responsible managers and ought to be allowed to "Manage their own ship". They can certainly manage their own fishing vessels, and we have no reason to trust them to manage our recreational interests in fisheries; and every reason to expect them to do all in their power to reduce or eliminate our recreational interests. Large corporate commercial interests can be relied upon to manage fisheries to short term financial goals. We absolutely do not trust large corporate entities to manage fish abundance for the benefit of local coastal communities, and believe that current moves by MFish in this direction are in direct contradiction of the requirements of the Fisheries Act to "to enable people to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing".

We are also concerned about the role Kahawai play in the wider ecosystem (interdependent species, seabirds, predator prey relationships) an obvious observation we note here in Kaikoura is that Kahawai drive krill towards shore and to the surface where seabirds such as red billed gulls and terns feed on the krill. Studies done on red billed gulls in Kaikoura show that they have declined by 51% over the same period as the demise of Kahawai; further we are concerned that less Kahawai are available as feed for larger fish and marine mammals, this has the potential to impact on the tourism mainstays of the Kaikoura community economics.

As Kahawai move around; the Kahawai stocks (lack of) in other management areas could be impacting on the levels that turn up in Kaikoura. What little research has been done on kahawai seems to indicate that they stay local for about 4 years then travel extreme distances. It seems likely from the lack of rebuild of this stock that there has been significant species replacement in the ecosystem, probably involving various species of mackerel and barracuda.

We need assurances that our plateau areas will not be over fished and that the 'outside influence' model is taken into account to address our local depletion.

Regards

Richard Craig

Richard Craig, richard.craig@xtra.co.nz 027 221 3313
Kaikoura Boating Club Recreational Fishers
Forum Member FMA 3&5 Recreational Fisheries Forum
Member Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura (Kaikoura Coastal Guardians)

Ted Howard
President - Kaikoura Boating Club
www.fishnet.co.nz/kbc/index.htm
Club: PO. BOX 98, KAIKOURA

ted@fishnet.co.nz
Skype - nz-ted
Ph 027 442 4281 AH/Fax 03 319 6797
Personal Physical/Postal: 1 Maui St, Kaikoura, NEW ZEALAND
Location: 42°25.123'S 173°41.626'E