

Kahawai catch limit decision announced

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<http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Press/Kahawai+catch+limit+decision+announced.htm?WBCMODE=PresentationUnpublished>

Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister, Phil Heatley has today announced his decision on catch limits for New Zealand's largest kahawai fishery.

The decision follows a review of catch limits for kahawai fisheries and will take effect for the fishing year starting on 1 October 2010.

Kahawai is an important and highly valued fishery, says Mr Heatley. "Kahawai are a traditional food source for customary Māori fishers, a very popular fish for recreational anglers, and a target species for commercial fishers," he says.

The largest kahawai fishery in the country stretches from North Cape to near East Cape (known as KAH1) and covers the important fishing grounds of the Bay of Plenty, Coromandel, Hauraki Gulf and Bay of Islands.

"I carefully considered the best scientific and management information available as well as submissions from customary, recreational and commercial fishers and the public before making these decisions," says Mr Heatley.

The Minister has decided to make a technical adjustment to the total catch limit and to recreational and customary Maori allowances in KAH1 to reflect new scientific advice on the actual current non-commercial catch levels.

"Because this reduction is only a technical adjustment, nothing will change on the water. There will be no change to recreational fishing rules or daily bag limits," said Mr Heatley.

Commercial catch limits will not change from current levels.

"The research we have suggests kahawai numbers in KAH1 are high; about 30% larger than the sustainable level set out in the Fisheries Act called BMSY."

"At current catch levels, kahawai numbers are set to continue growing and give more fish for everyone to catch more easily" Mr Heatley said.

Under the quota management system the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture sets a Total Allowable Catch for each fishery and then allocates a portion of that to customary Māori, recreational and commercial fishing interests so that each sector receives an allocation of fish while keeping the total catch within sustainable levels.

The final advice paper the Minister considered along with the submissions received will be posted on this website shortly.