

Report - Hokianga Accord hui

Mahurehure Marae, Auckland.

12 April 2013



*A place where old friendships can be rekindled and new people introduced
with a promise of rich korero on a range of matters important to us all.*

1. Introduction

The Hokianga Accord brings together the commercial and non-commercial interests of Ngapuhi, Ngati Whatua, other northern iwi and hapu, environmental and fishing interest groups. Greenpeace, the Environment and Conservation Organisations of Aotearoa New Zealand and NZ Sport Fishing Council representatives are regular contributors to the Accord's hui.

The intention of this Forum is to assist the Minister of Fisheries (the Minister) fulfil, in part, the Crown's ongoing statutory obligation to provide for the input and participation of tangata whenua having a non-commercial interest in fisheries, an interest in the effects of fishing on the aquatic environment while having particular regard to kaitiakitanga. (Fisheries Act 1996, s12 (1) (b))

Wane Wharerau was chairman for the day's discussions. Wane acknowledged Mahurehure marae as his whanau marae, and people were welcome for the day and at future events. He also noted the preparations by the forum's Working Group prior to the hui and Pieter Battaerd (chief caterer) in particular. Apologies were moved by Wane and seconded by Scott Macindoe.

This report was commissioned by the Hokianga Accord and written by Trish Rea. Feel free to download a copy of the hui report from www.HokiangaAccord.co.nz. Video clips of selected sessions are available; you are welcome to email Trish Rea at trish@legasea.co.nz to discuss your requirements.

2. Te Puna Mataitai application

After the passing of Judah Heihei, Hugh Rihari has become chairman for Te Roopu Kaitiaki Whakature I Nga Taonga o Tangaroa (Te Komiti). This is a committee overseeing the management and protection of the marine environment in the northern Bay of Islands.

In March 2008 an application was made to the Ministry of Fisheries to establish a Mataitai around a traditional food gathering area. In June 2011 the Hokianga Accord wrote to the Minister asking why there had been no progress on the Mataitai application and asking when approval was likely.

Hugh advised that after four years there had been little progress and no directions from officials as to why the application had not been approved.

In late 2012 Te Komiti asked the Ministry to confirm rumours that the Mataitai was going to be denied because it was too large. Te Komiti representatives met with Ministry officials in February 2013. To achieve some resolution they reluctantly agreed to reduce the original 26 square kilometre (sq km) application area by 11 sq km.

Te Komiti is concerned that the remaining 15 sq km application is likely to be the only Mataitai granted in the whole of Taitokerau, and that this area will be expected to meet the cultural needs of more than 120,000 people of Ngapuhi, the biggest iwi in Aotearoa. This area issue is significant because it is much smaller than the approved 40 sq km Aotea Mataitai, in Waikato.

During discussions it was agreed that the legislation concerning area management tools was cumbersome, seemingly designed to fail. However, there are 18 months between now and the next election. If the Accord wanted to promote new legislation and management tools, both customary and reserves, then consideration and development needs to start now.

3. Cape Brett peninsula marine protection

Joe Bristowe outlined the initial marine protection discussions between two hapu from the Rawhiti-Cape Brett area and conservation groups in the southern Bay of Islands. Discussions have included a potential marine reserve encompassing the northern tip of Urupukapuka Island and Red Head, and a Taiapure from the reserve edge, ENE to Deep Water Cove and southwest to Orokawa (Mosquito Point).

The intention of the reserve is to protect the stocks of pipi, scallops and crayfish, and enable any 'spillover' to re-stock adjacent areas within the Taiapure. After preliminary talks with the Bay of Islands Swordfish Club the boundary had been reconsidered to exclude the area up to 800m away from Whale Rock, off the tip of Urupukapuka. A consultation document inviting feedback from the public is expected around the end of April. The Hokianga Accord will be asked for their feedback.

Initial comment from hui participants was that Taiapure, rather than Mataitai, seemed to be a powerful tool to use for local management, especially with so many different interest groups in the Bay. Also, the notion of the existence and benefits of spillover from marine reserves to local areas was not universally accepted.

George Riley, Ngapuhi CEO, explained that Maori prefer Mataitai to Taiapure because the hapu/Te Komiti can control permit issuance and consequent harvest from their rohe.

4. Crayfish management review

Trish Rea advised that selected crayfish stocks are reviewed annually. In February the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council (NZSFC) submitted against any commercial catch increases in several areas. Apologies go to the Hokianga Accord for excluding their input into the February submission. In March the Minister for Primary Industries, Nathan Guy, decided against the NZSFC recommendations. The [NZSFC Crayfish submission process](#) is online.

Barry Torkington noted that a review of CRA 2, Bream Bay to East Cape, is expected later this year. This is the fishery that a majority of the population has access to, yet it is not providing for people's wellbeing. Commercial catch has remained stable but non-commercial catch has plummeted. It is concerning that management of CRA 1 (East-west Northland) is biased towards maximising commercial returns and it may also need to be reviewed soon. The Hokianga Accord agreed a policy is required to address the management failure in CRA 2 and to rebuild the stock to abundant levels.

Resolution

- The Hokianga Accord hui resolves to resource and support a review of the CRA 2 management measures and report the outcome to its constituent entities and supporters. Those entities will work together to produce a management policy prior to the next Accord hui.

Moved: Richard Baker
Seconded: George Riley

Actions

- Circulate to the Hokianga Accord hui database the recent crayfish submissions and correspondence from the National Rock Lobster Management Group.
- Develop and circulate a draft CRA 2 policy for endorsement by the Accord's constituent entities and other parties.
- Ngapuhi will circulate the draft policy to other iwi leaders for their review and advise their feedback.

5. Snapper 1 (SNA 1)

Barry Torkington discussed management of Snapper 1, which extends from North Cape to Cape Runaway, East Cape. Management of this fishery is likely to be reviewed before October. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council (NZSFC) has developed a policy supporting a rebuild of the fishery to the target level of 40% of unfished biomass.

The NZSFC policy and strategy to achieve the rebuild includes no increase to the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) until the target level is achieved, and improving the yield from the fishery by

reducing the waste and mortality of small fish, while managing people's impact on the marine ecosystem. The [Snapper 1 policy](#) is available for review and input.

Resolutions

- The Hokianga Accord endorses the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council Snapper 1 policy.

Moved: Steve Sangster
Seconded: Mark Connor

- The Hokianga Accord thanks the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council for resourcing and developing the Snapper 1 policy.

Moved: Max Purnell
Seconded: Joe Bristowe

6. LegaSea update

Mandy Kupenga has been the project leader for LegaSea since December 2012. LegaSea has been established to raise awareness of fisheries management issues and to generate funds to support the ongoing advocacy for the public's interests. In simple terms, LegaSea is the public's opportunity to unite, to express their opinions, to take action, and to make positive change.

Over the next 12 months a variety of marketing campaigns are envisaged around fisheries issues such as the expected snapper and crayfish reviews. Compelling messages need to be delivered so people understand these complex management issues.

Successful fundraising is another aspect of LegaSea that will lead to more resources being made available so fishers have a truly independent voice. There are several strategies already in place to take advantage of people willing to make a contribution. The website www.legasea.co.nz offers people various choices of contributions. Social media is another avenue of potential public awareness and fundraising activity.

It is encouraging that all three major fishing magazines are now promoting a LegaSea column in every issue¹. The team will be extending the public outreach over the next 12 months and will be at the Hutchwilco Boat Show in Auckland, in May.

7. Free Fish Heads

Matt Watson is using his profile to promote both LegaSea and Free Fish Heads (FFH). In December 2012 Matt and LegaSea launched www.FreeFishHeads.co.nz. TV3 filmed the [FFH team in action](#) at the Otago market. There has been a fantastic response from people registering on the web to receive free heads and frames. More fishermen with spare heads are needed. This summer a filleting service was trialled at several fishing competitions, with spare heads and frames distributed to the local community. Lessons learnt from this trial will be developed before next summer.

There are several objectives for Free Fish Heads. Firstly it is an introduction to LegaSea. Secondly it's a pathway into Polynesian and Asian communities. It is also fostering a new way to educate people about how they utilise the fish they catch, how to share the leftovers with others in their community and to conserve fish for the future. With these goals it is easy to envisage Free Fish Heads and LegaSea achieving widespread public awareness and support over the next 12 months.

8. Shark finning

Karli Thomas is Greenpeace's Oceans campaigner. She highlighted the gross waste of marine life associated with finning sharks at sea and dumping their carcasses overboard. Sharks are targeted for their fins to satisfy a limited, but high value export market. Finning can mean just 5% of the fish is used. Finning is currently legal in New Zealand, but the legislation is due for review this year.

¹ New Zealand Fishing News, BayFisher and New Zealand Fishing World.

Karli noted the irony that shark finning seemed to be the opposite of what www.FreeFishHeads.co.nz is trying to achieve, by encouraging people to treat their catch with respect, to maximise the yield from each fish taken and to share what is taken from the sea.

Some Pacific nations have already created sanctuaries or banned at-sea finning of sharks. Greenpeace is working with other interest groups, through the New Zealand Shark Alliance, to raise awareness and achieve legislative change. The Shark Alliance would welcome the Accord's support to have shark finning prohibited at sea, in New Zealand waters.

Resolution

- The Hokianga Accord supports the New Zealand Shark Alliance in seeking a ban on shark finning in New Zealand waters, to have whole sharks landed with their fins naturally attached, and to have that fish fully utilised.

Moved: George Riley
Seconded: Mark Connor

Action

- The Hokianga Accord will research and consult on quality, practical measures that can be implemented by commercial fishers to enable live release of sharks or maximum utilisation of sharks taken and retained, rather than fishing exclusively or primarily for their fins.

9. FADs in purse seine fisheries

Karli Thomas advised that purse seining is a common fishing method in Pacific waters. Some purse seine vessels are using up to 100 Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) each to attract tuna. FADs attract many other forms of marine life, including turtles, birds and juvenile fish such as yellowfin and bigeye tuna. Non-tuna bycatch of purse seines set around FADs is around 5% of total catch, compared to less than 1% without FAD use. In addition, up to 20% of the catch around FADs is undersized tuna – a huge impact on future stocks.

Studies have shown that the average size of purse seine-caught yellowfin tuna is around 1.3m long when the catch is made without FADs, compared with only 50cm when the catch is on a FAD. This means for the same tonnage there are more individual fish taken, and those fish will not have had a chance to breed - having a greater impact on the marine ecosystem.

Tuna purse seine catch has increased from around 400,000 metric tonnes in the 1980s to over 2 million metric tonnes in 2009. This exponential increase could explain why yellowfin tuna are now a rare visitor to New Zealand waters. The New Zealand government has raised concerns about the possibility of “range contraction” affecting yellowfin tuna and the Pacific Tuna Commission is now investigating this issue.

Resolution

- The Hokianga Accord supports an international ban on the use of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) by purse seine vessels.

Moved: Clive Monds
Seconded: Mark Connor

Action

- The Hokianga Accord will advise Greenpeace the outcome of any further discussions regarding FAD use while purse seining.

10. Revive our Gulf

Rebecca Barclay and Nathan Te Pairi presented information about ‘Revive our Gulf’, an ambitious project to restore the mussel beds in the Hauraki Gulf. Historically, mussel reefs were widespread and abundant. Poorly controlled and excessive commercial harvest led to annihilation of these reefs. After many years of closure the mussel reefs have not re-established, this could be due to poor water quality affected by land run-off, sedimentation or chemicals.

A multi-stakeholder group was working towards developing five test sites to trial restoration methods and monitor progress. More information is available at www.reviveourgulf.org.nz.

11. Hauraki Gulf management

Tim Higham is the Hauraki Gulf Forum manager for the Auckland Council. The Council and Hauraki Gulf Forum were working with various parties to improve the marine environment, associated and dependent species. There had been some success with birds and land management.

Discussion

It was frustrating for non-commercial fishing interests that fisheries in the Hauraki Gulf have been depleted by excessive commercial fishing, in contravention of ss7 & 8 of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 and the [Kahawai Legal Challenge outcome](#)².

Trevally was a once common fish but they are now hard to catch. Trevally has been identified in a Forum report as depleted. In March 2011 the then New Zealand Big Game Fishing Council, now NZ Sport Fishing Council, had asked the Forum to prompt the fisheries Ministry to address management concerns. No changes have been implemented.

Tim acknowledged the earlier correspondence had been passed onto MFish, but noted the Forum is unable to enforce action by its members.

The recreational fishing community was also concerned about the Hauraki Gulf marine spatial planning process. There have been few opportunities for fishers to have input, yet it seemed that fishing exclusion areas were being discussed. Planners needed to ensure the community, particularly fishermen, were involved early in the discussions.

Another issue was the unrealistic quota levels set for important fisheries. Many small, bait fisheries had quota levels set in 1986. These have not reviewed since, nor do they limit commercial effort. There is a paucity of information on the effects of methods deployed to capture these small fish, and the impacts on other species and the environment.

Resolution

- The Hokianga Accord resolves to seek a review and analysis of the quotas (allocations) set for small (bait) fishes and compare those quotas to historical catch levels, to determine any relationship between unconstrained harvest and decreasing abundance of these species.

Moved: Carl Jensen
Seconded: Scott Macindoe

12. Evaluation session

Hugh Rihari was pleased the Hokianga Accord had again discussed a broad range of issues and given people time to think about these matters. The Hokianga Accord was making good progress as evidenced by the efficient development and agreement on various resolutions.

Mark Connor, President of the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council, was also pleased with progress. It was enlightening and encouraging having so many different interest groups talking together. He committed the Council to working with others to give effect to the resolutions.

Jason Foord was a trustee of the Guardians of the Sea Charitable Trust. The Trust had been very supportive of earlier Hokianga Accord initiatives and looked forward to being of service in the future. He was struck by the passionate commitment of everyone involved and was thankful that people were working to protect his kids' future fishing interests.

Clive Monds has been a presenter at many Accord hui and is a spokesperson for an umbrella group, the Environment and Conservation Organisations of New Zealand. Reflecting on the day, it seemed there were fewer people in attendance because it has been such a long time since the last hui, in May 2011. Hopefully

² http://www.option4.co.nz/kahawai/documents/Kahawai_HGF_Letter_611.pdf

this hui has given people the incentive to get together more often. It was pleasing that this hui had spent a lot of time talking about the causes and effects of overfishing, and how to address those issues. The Accord needs to stay focused on the real issues affecting our marine environment.

David Cunliffe is the newly appointed fisheries spokesperson for the Labour Party. He was very pleased to witness the various interest groups working together to achieve some resolutions. It could be a lifeline to the future, he was trying to imagine what could be achieved if the public got onboard with this initiative. Fishing goes to the heart of all New Zealanders. David pledged to work tirelessly to preserve, maintain and enhance the interests of all our people.

Wane Wharerau finished the day by acknowledging the presenters and the work put in prior to the hui. On behalf of his whanau he appreciated the special gift from Sonny Tora and his Fijian whanau, and Uili Lousi (Tonga). We are all concerned about fishing and our families. The Free Fish Heads initiative was inspiring, as was the friendships made and reignited after being together for this hui.

Next hui will be later in the year, in Taitokerau. Venue to be confirmed.