

Hokianga Accord Update #1

NZ Fishing News October 2007 edition
September 2007

More fish in the water for tomorrow's mokopuna

Storm weather warnings weren't enough to keep 60 plus people away from the ninth overnight Hokianga Accord hui held in mid-August. It was an opportunity for the mid north iwi fisheries forum to hear about fishing technology innovations that undoubtedly offer a silver lining for future fisheries management.

Richard Burch, commercial fisherman from Napier, explained that by using a combination of improved net design and altering fishing methods, huge benefits can be gained. Dramatically reducing fuel consumption, juvenile mortality (death rate) and the amount of non-target (by-catch) fish killed while catching more of the target species are the noteworthy outcomes achieved on his vessel the Nancy Glen II.

Following these revelations was the presentation from Paul Barnes, inventor and fisheries advocate, explaining how both commercial and non-commercial fishers can reduce the amount of wastage merely by changing the type of hooks they use to catch fish. The Target Snapper Hook is the result of years of research which has been peer reviewed by independent scientists. As well as increasing the numbers of bigger fish caught, the Target Hook reduces the mortality of gut hooked, undersize fish by over 90%.

These technological advances had the assembled crowd of both Maori and non-Maori shaking their collective head and asking questions as to why these innovations were not being used now.

Answers ranged from reluctance on behalf of the fishing industry to change methods and reduce their by-catch, the value of that by-catch and the lack of incentives for any change. A serious flaw within the current quota management system (QMS) framework is that there are no incentives for fishers to conserve. Meaningful rewards, such as an increase in quota, have to be available before we are likely to see any widespread change.

Both speakers have been invited to present an update at the next Accord hui, on the 9th and 10th November at Waipapa marae, Auckland University.

Ngapuhi Trustee, Te Raa Nehua, discussed the Hokianga Accord's recent submission on the future management of North Island tuna (eels). The submission was sent to the Ministry of Fisheries (MFish) at the end of July after widespread consultation amongst non-commercial fishing groups and is online at http://www.option4.co.nz/Fisheries_Mgmt/eel.htm

Abe Witana, Te Rarawa, updated the Accord on the activities of Te Hiku O Te Ika Forum. This far north forum is under development, and unlike the Hokianga Accord, still has the support of MFish.

Implications of the outcome of the Kahawai Legal Challenge and MFish' *Shared Fisheries* process were discussed as was the upcoming Marine Protected Areas project, a joint venture by MFish and the Department of Conservation.

A full report of the hui will soon be available online alongside previous reports at www.HokiangaAccord.co.nz.

The Hokianga Accord includes Ngapuhi, Ngati Whatua, commercial, customary and amateur fishing interests. The New Zealand Big Game Fishing Council and fisheries advocacy group option4 are staunch supporters of the Accord and their objective of “more fish in the water/ kia maha atu nga ika i roto i te wai”.