

Letter to the editor of the Bay Chronicle newspaper

21 October 2010

Fishy facts need checking

It's a pity you didn't check the facts with us before writing your 7 October front-page story, 'Kahawai "under strain"'.

It is not correct to say there has been a "decline" in kahawai numbers in Quota Management Area 1, which includes eastern Northland.

In fact, the latest scientific information shows that the kahawai stock has been increasing over the past five years.

The stock size in Area 1 is now 30 percent larger than the sustainable level required by law.

The stock will keep growing under the catch levels set recently by Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister Phil Heatley.

It is also misleading to say that recreational and customary kahawai allocations have been "slashed". No changes have been made to the number of fish recreational fishers and customary permit holders are able to take. The changes announced are technical only; they correct the allocations in response to improved information on actual non-commercial catch levels.

In summary, the kahawai stock is in good health and the decisions mean there will be even more kahawai in future, which is good for recreational and customary fishers.

Wayne McNee

Chief Executive

Ministry of Fisheries