



Public quest to find the truth

In August LegaSea launched the What's Fishing Worth? campaign to help raise \$400,000 to support the New Zealand Marine Research Foundation's project seeking to put a dollar value on recreational fishing in New Zealand.

As individual recreational fishers we know we spend lots on rods, reels, bait, fuel and tackle.

Collectively, we have no idea how much is spent on this gear and the big ticket items like boats, towing vehicles, accommodation and meals when we get to our destination.

There are thousands of businesses and whole communities that rely on recreational fishing for their existence. Yet recreational fishing is not recognised as a bona fide industry, nor is there acknowledgement that we need abundant fisheries to ensure this business sector survives.

In 2014 we estimated the road tax collected from sales of fuel used in boats was around \$67 million per annum. For years people have argued that tax ought to be ring-fenced and applied to fisheries. That argument has fallen on deaf ears.

The good news is the New Zealand Marine Research Foundation is determined to close these knowledge gaps and produce a compelling business case to support recreational fishing, its attendant industries, and more abundant fisheries.

Southwick Associates (Florida) and two local enterprises are conducting the actual research. Preliminary research results are expected by December and a full blown peer-reviewed report by mid-2016.

Southwicks are experienced at this type of research, particularly in countries where recreational fishing industries are not well recognised. Southwicks have seen their research change the way people view the ocean, creating a more positive attitude towards conservation and maintaining fish abundance.

Their study of the Cabo San Lucas area in Mexico influenced political and management priorities after finding that sportfishing generated over \$245 million in new taxes. And, that the total economic activity associated with 345,000 visiting anglers was estimated to be approximately USD\$1.125 BILLION!

Back in Aotearoa, after 30 years of the quota management system we still have our precious kahawai being exported for \$1.45 per kilo, and 25-29cm snapper being sold to Australia for \$9.00.

It's time to smarten up. We can do so much better with our current marine resources.

What can you do?

Please donate. 100% of your donation goes towards the project and is tax deductible because the New Zealand Marine Research Foundation is a registered charity.

We also need your family, friends and colleagues to know what's going on, and only you can reach them by sharing www.whatsfishingworth.co.nz.

ENDS

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LegaSea is a public outreach initiative of the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council. The Council has an experienced fisheries management, science, policy and legal team. On behalf of the Council LegaSea raises funds and provides public-friendly information about a variety of processes that are important to restoring abundance in our fisheries for future generations.