

## **LegaSea Update 1**

Bay Fisher magazine, September 2012 edition



### **Future abundance is in your hands**

LegaSea has been launched to achieve the vision of ‘more fish in the water for future generations’. It’s a bold plan that supports the people campaigning for less wasteful fishing practices, protection of sensitive marine habitats and to ensure fish conserved today are available for tomorrow’s generation of fishers. All it takes is a simple contribution from you, your family, friends and even the business you work for.

If you can imagine the ultimate fishing experience, then there is no reason why our kids and theirs would not want the same. If enough Kiwis support LegaSea now we can all leave a legacy of abundance for the future.

### **A myriad of threats**

What we once thought as public property or fundamental to our Kiwi lifestyle have now become commercial “opportunities”. Fisheries are no exception. As costs rise so does the demand for more profits and exports.

However, some of our most important inshore fisheries are at full capacity or over-exploited.

This means less fish available inshore where most of us go to catch a feed, or enjoy a family day out.

We need to rebuild our fisheries so they are sufficiently abundant to enable us to provide for our social, economic and cultural wellbeing – a guiding purpose of the Fisheries Act.

### **Kahawai Legal Challenge**

In 2004 we were at a crossroad. Kahawai was being divvied up between interest groups after its introduction into the Quota Management System. Little consideration was being given to the years of plundering by industrial harvesting methods, mostly purse seiners guided by spotter planes.

The public was expected to take what they were given – a depleted inshore fishery, less ecosystem functionality and few seabirds - and watch as kahawai was being exported for low value craybait and fishmeal products.

This was unacceptable. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council spearheaded a challenge against the fisheries Minister’s management decisions. Debate raged through the Courts for four years.

In 2009 the Supreme Court dismissed the Council’s appeal, but also clarified many aspects of the Minister’s decision-making duties. Notably, that he has the discretion to manage a fishery and give preference to either commercial or recreational interests. While doing so, he must be reasonable when making an allowance for our interests.

Undoubtedly our interests lie in having access to abundant fisheries and a healthy marine environment.

In 2010 there was a breakthrough - the Minister agreed to manage northern kahawai at a higher abundance level so numbers could increase and they would be easier to catch.

Since 2004 there has been a noticeable increase in kahawai numbers and size in many coastal areas.

### **Advent of LegaSea**

During and after the Kahawai Challenge the NZ Sport Fishing Council was well supported by option4 and Maori interests, namely Ngapuhi and Ngati Whatua through the Hokianga Accord.

After 15 overnight Accord hui, listening, talking and sharing information with environmental interests we all came to realise our close links. We do not agree on all aspects however, that does not stop us working on common concerns.

It is in everyone's collective interests to have abundance inshore, for those seeking to feed their whanau, for recreation and to satisfy public expectation for thriving coastal waters.

Over time it was obvious that option4 and the NZ Sport Fishing Council were advocating for the same outcomes. In September 2011 the people at the heart of option4 announced their intention to fully commit their support to the NZ Sport Fishing Council.

LegaSea was officially launched in February this year. It is not a new entity; LegaSea is the NZ Sport Fishing Council's channel to raise funds to protect our collective fishing interests.

All money raised through LegaSea is managed by the Council and dedicated to four work streams, namely:

- **ADVOCACY**
- **RESEARCH**
- **EDUCATION**
- **working TOGETHER**

These aspects have been identified as the best way to achieve the LegaSea vision and comply with legislation that demands fisheries are sustained for future use.

### **ADVOCACY**

In Aotearoa we have four million residents, soon that will be six; more fish in the water will be needed to provide for future generations' needs.

Aside from northern kahawai, we have few examples of fisheries being managed with our kids' interests in mind. Hence the need for LegaSea!

As recreational fishers we neither have the desire nor the means to race off to Court every time we object to a management decision.

It would be more beneficial if we had an organisation that could effectively **ADVOCATE** our interests.

As evidenced by the success of the Kahawai Challenge, the NZ Sport Fishing Council has both the policy and people required to achieve the best outcome.

Collectively the team has more than 100 years of advocacy experience and has produced a raft of submissions, legal, science and public awareness material.

With your support the Council can become an even more effective and dynamic organisation focused on protecting our priceless non-commercial fishing interests.

### **RESEARCH**

Everyone knows the adage 'who pays the piper calls the tune'. Despite being touted as 'world leading,' it is an unusual aspect of our management system that commercial interests fund most fisheries research. In stocks where recreational harvest is significant, the Ministry of Primary Industries (formerly Fisheries) is the majority funder. Resources are focused on stock assessment and harvest estimates. Often this science is not readily available for public scrutiny even when it has been paid for by our taxpayer dollars.

Consequently, there is dearth of information on social, economic and cultural values available to support many of the arguments put forward to protect and enhance our non-commercial fishing interests.

The New Zealand Marine Research Foundation and Blue Water Marine Research have provided valuable science, reports and advice to the NZ Sport Fishing Council for years. All money spent is carefully considered, scrutinised and reported thoroughly.

In a commodity-driven world it is critical we fund LegaSea to ensure we, the public, have access to our own **RESEARCH**.

## **EDUCATION**

Since 2009 over 125,000 children at 480 schools have experienced the Hiwi the Kiwi Goes Fishing show and teaching resource. They learnt vital messages about fishing for the future, fish handling, boat safety and being waterwise.

With your support there is potential to reach another 125,000 kids and provide a balance to the PC-messages they are being inundated with every day.

## **working TOGETHER**

Positive outcomes have been achieved by working TOGETHER on agreed issues with environmental organisations and tangata whenua. The simple act of sharing information has provided opportunities not previously available.

The NZ Sport Fishing Council has earned respect and a reputation for being a voice of reason, especially when it comes to the cut-and-thrust of fisheries management discussions.

This cooperative effort is making a noticeable difference to the relationships amongst various advocates, and to moderating the more extreme views.

## **Charting our future**

Industry and non-commercial commentators have expressed interest in having recreational fishers constrained by smaller bag limits and a statutory body. Under current circumstances neither of these suggestions are acceptable.

Firstly, because any conservation by recreational fishers seems to be interpreted as an opportunity to subsidise current catch or increase commercial quota and exports.

Secondly, it is inevitable that a statutory body established to “represent” recreational fishing interests would need to charge you and I a compulsory license fee to sustain itself. Overseas experience demonstrates these bodies can rapidly grow into a sprawling bureaucracy.

Through LegaSea, the NZ Sport Fishing Council is determined to focus on providing a voluntary advocacy model that enhances, rather than detracts, from our current and future fishing interests.

## **Innovative strategies**

Sustainability is described in the Purpose of the Fisheries Act (1996) as meaning “maintaining the potential of fisheries resources to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations...”.

The NZ Sport Fishing Council has innovative strategies to achieve abundance soon and for the future. A simple start includes:

- Ensuring fish conserved by recreational fishers stay in the water to grow and multiply for the wellbeing of future generations – not allocating these fish as commercial quota and exporting them.
- Radically reducing the wastage and senseless killing of juvenile fish by inappropriate fishing methods, by any sector.
- Eliminating bottom-contact fishing methods from habitats of special significance.

We can leave future fishing interests to chance, or we can contribute to our kid’s destiny. Support LegaSea and ensure we have an effective voice championing our interests!

## **Your contribution**

LegaSea is seeking a simple contribution of \$20 per person, more for families and business support is most welcome. Reports will be quarterly. In a year’s time we are hoping that you will be suitably impressed with progress and dip into your pocket again for another few bucks.

More so, we need you to bring your mates on board. With few funds we cannot reach these people. We are relying on you to be bold and get them and your family into LegaSea. We are doing our best to impress and your endorsement would make a meaningful difference.

## **How to get involved**

W: [www.legasea.co.nz](http://www.legasea.co.nz) – sign up for e-news, buy great merchandise and make an easy, secure contribution

E: [info@legasea.co.nz](mailto:info@legasea.co.nz) - we have a new batch of brochures & business cards for you to distribute to family, friends & colleagues.

A cockpit pack - your ultimate device to hook your mates in, containing:

- A cockpit sticker alerting your crew that you expect them to support you & contribute to LegaSea before they fish on your vessel.
- A TAG-pad of information cards, including contribution forms
- LegaSea brochures to inform & tune up your crew.

P: 0800 LEGASEA (534 273).

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube – Search for LegaSea & watch Matt Watson's clip, 'What is fishing worth?'

## ***BREAK-OUT BOXES***

LEGASEA is....

- A cause striving for abundant fisheries.
- A voice for all people that care about our public fishing interests.
- A campaign for less wastage & senseless killing of juvenile fish.
- A commitment to advocate banishing bottom-contact fishing methods from sensitive marine habitats.
- A watchdog monitoring companies & groups that threaten our fishery, public rights and access.

Your contribution will....

- Support the fight against commercial overfishing.
- Fund school education programs.
- Fund important research to support recreational fishing interests.
- Enable experts to convert management issues into plain language summaries so you & I can understand what it all means!

## **THREATS TO SUCCESS**

- A silent, uninformed public vulnerable to being filleted by a government & commercial interests focused on exporting as many fish as possible.
- Reducing recreational bag limits to subsidise exports.
- Degraded inshore marine environment.
- Statutory management that constrains recreational fishing & requires compulsory licensing that feeds an avaricious bureaucracy.

LEGASEA wants....

- To ensure fish conserved today are able to grow & multiply for future public use.
- To strive for continued, effective voluntary advocacy of non-commercial interests.
- YOU to stand up for yourself & your family by contributing today.
- At least 20,000 Kiwis to say YES, I'm In.