

LegaSea Update 17

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Crayfish – anyone smell a rat?

In December the Ministry released proposals for management of crayfish in area 2 that runs from Waipu in the north to Waihi, Bay of Plenty. It's an important fishery yet is the worst performing of the crayfish fisheries. I'm sure many of you have experienced first hand the effects of struggling stocks.

Apart from the poor state of the stocks, of grave concern is how the stock levels are measured and commercial quota allocated. They are measured by reported commercial crayfish catch. The formula used basically looks at how much effort (commercial resource) fishing boats use to catch their quota and is called CPUE (catch per unit of effort).

If the amount of effort is satisfactory then the assumption is made that stocks are fine and quota is set accordingly. So in essence each years quota levels are determined by the amount of effort of commercial fishing and the resulting catch.

That's right commercial catch determines future catch! Anyone smell a rat?

It's been this way for years and it's time for change. At the very least independent stock assessments are critical. We are facing quota increases in areas where local people find it difficult to gather cray for the table and we are concerned for the future of crayfish.

Change must be made in our fisheries management to prioritise the more positive benefits for society, for people and not just the elite corporate quota holders. The social, cultural and environmental aspects of managing our resources must emerge at the top of the melting pot of agendas.

Presently the Ministry for Primary Industries are focused with economic outcomes and this is reflected in their stated mission, that they are "committed to helping the primary industries to double the value of exports by 2025". Double the current value of exports!

LegaSea backed by our fisheries management professionals at the NZ Sport Fishing Council will be making a submission to the Ministry to call for change. To make change a reality we need your support.

Help us protect the future of fishing in New Zealand by getting on board with LegaSea. To find out more about this visit our website www.legasea.co.nz or check us out on Facebook www.facebook.com/legasea

Please consider making a modest, regular contribution to LegaSea. It will go a long way to fund the resources required to lobby for a better, more secure fishing future.