



Aquaculture reclassified as a prohibited activity

A successful legal challenge to the Northland Regional Council's coastal policy means that new aquaculture operations are prohibited from many popular boating and fishing areas, anchorages and navigation routes on the northeast coast. The Council's revised coastal policy, applicable from May 9th, reclassifies aquaculture operations as a prohibited activity in specific areas.

In addition to securing significant aquaculture-free zones in Northland, the Environment Court ruling is set to influence plan changes by other councils, benefiting boaties nationwide.

LegaSea supporters and the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council members acknowledge the effort and resources required since 2007 to achieve this positive outcome for boating and recreational fishing interests.

Richard Baker, LegaSea spokesperson, welcomes the news, "Having been through lengthy and complex legal proceedings ourselves we appreciate the substantial time and money that Yachting New Zealand, the Auckland and Northland Yachting Associations, and other parties, have committed to this effort."

Andrew Clouston, Yachting New Zealand's Participation and Development Manager, is pleased the Environment Court decision has led to Plan changes that recognise the importance of recreational activity, and the need for safe havens in bad weather for all boaties.

"Previously the plan didn't consider that boats, particularly yachts, don't always travel in a straight line and deserve more than a narrow transit corridor when moving around our coastline. As a result of the decision we have seen recognised transit routes for vessels widened and expanded."

LegaSea agrees with the successful challengers that this result is notable, in terms of protecting our coastline, coastal waters and anchorages from the adverse effects of aquaculture.

The full Yachting New Zealand release on this decision is available here:

<http://www.yachtingnz.org.nz/news/201605/big-win-for-boaties-in-northland-advocacy-case>

Recent advocacy

A central theme to the recent submissions to the Ministry for Primary Industries is the need for more precautionary management of our fish stocks. The Minister's decisions are a mixed bag, with cuts to commercial catch limits for selected scallop and crayfish stocks and significant increases in commercial surf clam catch limits around the South Island.

The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council and affiliated Bay of Plenty clubs did not support a recent proposal to close Astrolabe Reef to all fishing for the next two years. The 2-nautical mile radius closure imposed after the Rena grounding has now been removed. The recent proposal sought a 3nm closure.

<http://goo.gl/TNUCOX>

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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.